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MY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCE:

BEING

MEMORIALS, MIND-PORTRAITS,

AND

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF

Deceased Celebrities

OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY:

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM THEIR UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

By P. G. PATMORE,

AUTHOR OF

"CHATSWORTH; OR, THE ROMANCE OF A WEEK;" "MARRIAGE IN MAY FAIR," ETC. ETC. ETC.

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R. PLUMER WARD.

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R. PLUMER WARD.

VII.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE" AND "DE VERE."

I NOW recur to the commencement of my literary intercourse with the author of "Tremaine," which, for more than a year and a half, remained anonymous on both sides—a fact which makes it needful that I say a few words in explanation of the origin and nature of the early portion of the following correspondence.

Up to the period of his composing the work entitled "Tremaine, or the Man of Refinement," Mr. Ward's whole life, after leaving college, had been one uninterrupted scene of active business, first as a practising barrister, and afterwards as a Member of Parliament and of a great political party; so that,

although he retained all the elegant scholarship and classic tastes he had acquired at Christ's Church, Oxford, under his accomplished and beloved master, Dr. Cyril Jackson, he had found few or no occasions for practice in English composition.* Moreover, his miscellaneous English reading had been chiefly confined to the school of Anne and her immediate successor; and he was fully aware of the great changes which English style had undergone since the establishment of the two great Quarterly Reviews: and though he did not admit those changes to be in all cases improvements, he fully recognised the general progress which the mere "complement extern" of our literature had made during the first quarter of the present century.

Under these cirumstances, and addressing, as he chose avowedly to do in the case of "Tremaine," the *popular* taste of the day, he wished to obtain for that work, during its

* The treatise on "The Law of Nations," and the two or three political pamphlets which he wrote at a very early period of his political career, can scarcely be regarded as contradicting the above remark.

passage through the press, the benefit of such suggestions in regard to mere style and composition, as might seem called for in the judgment of some *professional* writer, whose practice, in connexion with the critical literature of the day, might be supposed to have given him those facilities in handling the mere mechanism of composition which nothing *but* long practice can impart.

The result, in one word, was that the MS. of "Tremaine" was proposed to be placed in my hands; and (after a delighted perusal of the first volume) I accepted the task of its revisal, under the express stipulation, on my part, that no proposed change or suggestion of mine, however slight or minute, should be carried into effect without the distinct sanction and approval of the author or his editor —for such the anonymous party communicating with the publisher was at first supposed to be.

Of course, the last thing to be expected from the honest and uncompromising fulfilment of a task like this, was the state of things which has at once enabled and impelled me to place before the world these

Recollections, and the correspondence which alone gives them any value. In fact, the frank good temper and generous candour with which the anonymous author of "Tremaine" received and replied to the suggestions of his anonymous adviser and critic (Heaven save the mark!) were among the most characteristic features of his healthy and finely-balanced mind; and, as might naturally be expected, they led, in the case in question, to my not seldom taking the liberty of throwing out hints and making suggestions which the merely *clerical* character of my task would not have warranted, in the absence of the marked encouragement thus afforded me, still less in the presence of my strong sense of the immeasurable inferiority of the critic to the criticised, in every quality of mind, both natural and acquired—with the sole and insignificant exception of that mere mechanical facility of hand (so to speak) which long practice may give to *any* hand, and the absence of it must withhold from all.

So true, indeed, is this, that by the time I had reached the middle of the work I found that there was really no occasion for further

revision as to mere style; and I suggested as much, but was overruled: and in all his subsequent works, except the "Pictures of Human Life" (which was published when I was residing abroad), Mr. Plumer Ward, I believe, stipulated with his publisher, as part of the arrangement between them, that the MS. should pass through my hands.

I have felt no little difficulty in persuading myself formally to refer to circumstances which have compelled me not only to speak of myself, but to place myself in the light of a critic on the writings of a man towards whom, from the first moment that I knew him through the medium of his first work (as above alluded to), till the melancholy close of our intimacy by his death, I was accustomed to feel, and to look up to, with a respectful admiration that was only prevented from mounting into reverence by the frank cordiality and almost child-like simplicity of his personal bearing among his friends and associates. But when I recollect that Mr. Ward himself was in the habit of alluding, among his friends, and especially when I was present, to what he was pleased to call "my

share" of "Tremaine" and "De Vere," and that many of his most valuable and interesting letters would be either unintelligible, or would lead to erroneous conclusions, in the absence of some such explanation as that which I have now afforded, I feel that it would have been an unmeaning affectation to ignore circumstances which have formed the most gratifying feature of a literary life, which, however humble, has included not a few of a similar character, and none of an opposite one.

VIII.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE" AND "DE VERE"—(*continued*).

PERHAPS nothing is more indispensable to the just and complete appreciation of any considerable work, whether of fiction or of fact, than a knowledge of what the writer desired and aimed at in the composition of it; and this is a knowledge rarely to be obtained—partly from the morbid fastidiousness of modern taste in regard to a writer speaking of himself and his productions—partly because few writers really know what it is they do aim at, or really do aim at anything at all, consistently and consecutively.

No writer was ever less open to either of these imputations than Plumer Ward; and for this reason the following notices, incomplete as they are, will not only be read with interest and curiosity for themselves, but claim to be put on record in justice to the writer himself.

The following is a portion of the letter which accompanied the MS. of "Tremaine" when offered to the notice of its publisher :—

"July 30-24.

Sir,

"* * * * I am in possession of a manuscript work, the plan of which is at least singular. The form is certainly that of a novel, in which there is a love-story of no ordinary description; for though, in my opinion, it is full of interest, it is made the vehicle of the deepest disquisitions upon natural religion, particularly that part of it which concerns Providence and a future state. A great portion of it is also taken up with practical morality, and axioms relative to habits of life as they conduce to the happiness of man.

"The action depends upon this—a man of parts, of the first *monde* in fashion, and well known in public, from too fastidious a taste and sickly fancy, retires in disgust to view the world only at a distance. He gives the title to the work, which is called 'The Man of Refinement.' He is as un-

happy in solitude as in the world, and would be lost but for the endeavour of a practical moralist, his neighbour and friend, to reclaim him to society.

"The latter is a divine, of learning and piety, and contests between these two furnish the channel for the various discussions which occur, while the little scenes in which, and out of which, they arise, form the interest.

"The divine has a daughter. The 'Man of Refinement,' disgusted with both the upper and lower ranks of females, finds all he wants here. But his refinement has made him depart from nature, while she is nature itself. He cures all his bad habits and unreasonable disgusts to gain her, and actually does gain her affection. But in his refinement he has lost his religion, while she is all piety. She refuses him, therefore, at the expense of her happiness and health, which are ruined. He, indeed, promises to be reclaimed; but she will only accept the reclamation of perfect conviction. This, at last, is accomplished by her father; and the combat between infidelity and the truth exhibits much interesting learning. There is,

however, neither cant nor pedantry; all is popular, though the research is deep. The allusions and illustrations, too, are, on all the subjects, taken from known characters, chiefly from high, and frequently from political life.

In short, the whole is the work of a man evidently himself of the world in its higher stages, though also a man of the closet. His name, however, is forbidden to appear. The Man of Refinement being converted in everything, is in the end happy in being brought ɐbck to truth, and a wife the daughter of truth.

"The work does not reach Revealed Religion. * * * * I am, Sir,

"THE INTENDED EDITOR,

("for the present unknown.")

As Mr. Ward was, during our subsequent intimacy, fond of recurring to circumstances connected with our early anonymous communications together, I learned from him many particulars relative to the composition and production of both "Tremaine" and

"De Vere," some of which I shall record in their respective places, as matters furnishing materials for future literary history. The foregoing letter, he informed me, led (after an interval of some months, during which his letter and MS. were not noticed) to a spontaneous offer on the part of Mr. Colburn, of 500*l.* for the copyright of "Tremaine," and this offer was at once accepted by Mr. Ward.

The following letters must speak for themselves. Copies of them were transmitted to the reviser, by the writer's direction, during the passage of the MS. of "Tremaine" through the hands of the former:—

"Nov. 26, 1824.

"I have examined with great care, and I may add, for the most part with great approbation, the emendations made by your judicious friend in the first volume of 'Tremaine;' and I have the pleasure to say I concur with him in almost all his suggestions, corrections, and omissions. I may add that the latter are fewer than I expected. I do

not quite agree with him in everything; but even where I do not, I have generally submitted to his greater experience, and allowed the alterations to go as he proposes, from deference to his authority.

"As to the corrections in language, some of them are indubitably preferable to the passages corrected, and in the greater part of the rest the alteration is so little different from my own taste that I have unhesitatingly adopted almost all that has been proposed.

"I have as little hesitation in saying that the criticism throughout seems most judicious. Of one thing I beg you will assure him, with my compliments, that no excuses whatever were necessary for what he calls 'liberties;' and that nothing can be less grounded than his fears of what he pleases to apprehend may be thought impertinent.

"I was rather sorry to part with the two (I own) ridiculous disputations at the sessions, for they had pleased my fancy; but I have deferred to his reasons there also. I have, however, not been able to give up the

allusion to the departed character of the old country squire—from prejudice, perhaps, but not on that account the less operative; and there may be readers, possibly, not so polished as your friend, who may agree with me and not him upon it.

"For the same reason I have kept a little of the conversation at the sessions, proposed to be omitted, and also a shortened sketch of the political heart-burnings among country magistrates, which I can myself witness are not unjustly described. I think I have abandoned all the rest, with the exception of a page or two of religious allusions and reflections, by Careless, after the garden conversation; and these I would propose keeping, not so much for the sake of the reflections themselves, as to keep before the reader, or rather to prepare him at all proper opportunities, for what is to form the most important part, indeed the only real and great object, of the work.

"Your friend has struck out a little gipsy scene introducing the pic-nic dinner; and also much of Vellum and Steward; and I defer here to his better knowledge of what

may please the public; yet I have some regret, for I own it is to my taste.

"As a general observation upon the criticism, possibly I may think, though perhaps erroneously, that the mind of the critic has been so smoothed by the regular habits does of literary and *town* society, that he not easily condescend to the rougher manners and characters of remote country life. The author, though immersed from infancy in the world, had a different taste, which must account for several passages in the work which the editor would have left, but for the respect he has conceived for the reviewer.

"Upon the whole, the castigations have only increased my esteem for the powers of your friend, to whose acquaintance, I repeat, I shall be glad if I can ever be introduced.

* * * * *

"T."

"Dec. 10, 1824.

"Sir,—I send back the second volume of 'Tremaine,' and am gratified to find it has been thought liable to so few corrections by

your literary friend. It would indeed be affectation to say that the praise bestowed on many parts, and the interest the story seems to have inspired in such a mind as the critic evidently possesses, have not given me much pleasure. From such a man, too, it is the best warranty that could be desired of success with the public.

" As to the corrections, I have adopted almost every one of them; and though I did not like to part with the conversations after dinner at Bellenden House, I have reduced them by a full half. I did not part with them altogether, because the speakers are real characters, which will be recognised by many. Mrs. Neville is in particular a portrait; so is Beaumont; so the Scotch Doctor, the Traveller, and Miss Lyttleton: nay, the leather breeches story is a fact well known among the gentry in the north, and I therefore keep it.

" As you may possibly send this to your friend, I will add a few more remarks, relative to those he has been so good as to make himself

"He asks why Tremaine is called Mr. Belville. It is in allusion to 'The Conscious Lovers,' Belville in that play being the protector of Indiana, and wooing her in that capacity. So here, according to Mrs. Neville's scandal, Tremaine and Melainie.

"The remark on the Opera failing in its power over thorough-paced opera-goers is very just; but the effect too often is, that they do not *recover* the tone of their minds, but become *blasés*. It is like dram drinking.

"The remark on the words '*true* God,' which is corrected to 'what the Jews thought the true God,' better expresses the author's sense, and I have adopted it.

"I have kept the story of Sergeant B.'s law pedantry, because it is known and apposite. * * *

"I am not wedded to the fact of the accident at the breakfast table; but it is the keystone to so many passages of the history (I mean in point of form) afterwards, that, finding it difficult to alter, I have left it.

* * * * "T."

" Monday Night.

" * * * * * I could send them now [the proofs], but retain them to consider an important suggestion of your critical friend—in truth a very cogent argument, which deserves much thought whether to introduce it or not. I can, however, deal with it in a few hours, if noticed at all, and only on account of the present state of the MS. wish I had had the benefit of the suggestion sooner.* * * * *

" I cannot too often repeat how advantageous I feel his criticism has been, and how

---

* If I remember rightly, the suggestion referred to was apropos to an argument of Evelyn, that the almost universal *hope* of a future state is a sufficient proof of the existence of such a state—on the principle that a beneficent Deity would not implant such a hope and leave it groundless. The suggestion was, that the argument was open to the objection, on the part of the sceptical Tremaine, that even admitting the existence of such a hope, and the beneficence of the Deity in implanting it (which latter Tremaine nowhere denies), the hope in question is a beneficent *end* in itself, and will not be disappointed even in the ultimate event of there being no such state. On referring to the last edition of "Tremaine," the original argument of the MS. seems to have been omitted.

I defer to it in almost all instances. He will see in how very few I have differed, and in some even of these I think him right. I think him so in suggesting a curtailment of the *cases* illustrative of Providence; and if I have preserved them it is because of the want of them in almost every one of the treatises, whether of divines or laymen, on that subject. These were generally confined to general principles and propositions, when *cases* are what speak most intelligibly to the sort of readers for whom I have written.

"I think him right in proposing to omit the very abstruse problem quoted by Archbishop King. I fairly own it is above my mathematical learning to comprehend it: yet, as it *is* proveable to those who have this learning, the more it appears *jargon* the more it is for my purpose.

"You will suppose I mean all this for your friend. Let me add, that his criticisms as to style seem almost always just, and I have always changed what he has pointed at as obscure, with real benefit. He has read me with close and gratifying atten-

tion, and I cannot but have profited by his reading.

* * * * "T."

The following letter relates to the second edition of "Tremaine;" and I must premise, in regard to the curtailments and "castigations" to which this letter, and one relating to the same subject in Mr. Phipps's book, refer, that though consenting to assist in carrying out the proposed curtailment, I had no hand whatever in proposing, and in fact did not approve of it. It is true that certain critics, otherwise favourable to the work, had spoken of it in general terms as "too long." But even if this complaint was a valid one—which few of its admirers will admit—the time was past for correcting it, when the work was before the world in a large edition, and was in the act of running a brilliant and successful course:—

"April 24, 1824.

"Dear Sir,—I was so desirous of losing no time in sending back the first volume of

'Tremaine,' yesterday, that I wrote in too great a hurry. In particular, if your critical friend was really serious in what he said about 'imputation,' I ought to have explained more than I did what I meant by his being *partial* (for I cannot think I called him a panegyrist) in the —— Review. By partial, then, I did not mean partial to *you*, but to a work which he had himself, by his judicious emendations, contributed to form: perhaps I might say partial to Georgina, whose character he seemed to so much like. If he thinks I imputed to him that he would be a panegyrist contrary to his opinions and feelings, nothing can be more erroneous; and I beg you will lose no time in giving him this explanation. You see I continue to suppose him the Reviewer in the —— (indeed, am only confirmed by his letter in thinking so), and my respect for him makes me anxious to remove all notion from him that I could have meant anything derogatory to his perfect freedom of mind. Indeed, I cannot imagine yet that he can have been serious, but that some of the

language he has used indicates something like an offended spirit.

" Upon consideration, I do not think that the emendations you have sent me (with the exception of those of the punctuation, which are most valuable) go far enough; and with the exception of *Eugenia's* story, which you know I have entirely left to your friend's discretion, I would wish my own castigations to be pursued in addition to his. * *

" Wherever I have added any sentence giving a somewhat different turn to the ideas conveyed, I request it may be most exactly followed. You will, however, find this is scarcely anywhere done, except in one or two pages of the Bellenden House conversations—particularly in the description of Mrs. Neville, and in the chapter on Lord St. Clair previous to his offer to Georgina. I have very particular reasons for wishing this to be most strictly complied with, and depend upon you exactly to second my wish.

" * * I am glad your friend consents to have in the Bellenden House conversations and characters. But I do not think I mis-

construed his objection to them originally. The words he used were—'they are all great bores'—the honesty of which cured their brusquerie; but I could not collect that his dislike to them proceeded chiefly from their being of no consequence to the story. With great submission to him, they are even connected with the story, as developing much of both Georgina and Tremaine, for without them we should know nothing of his *penchant* for Miss Neville or Lady Gertrude. Lady Gertrude afterwards even connects with the story, and Mrs. Neville, too, in the affair of Melainie; and at any rate they, with Miss Lyttleton, absolutely give rise to the night conversation in the carriage on returning home—so critical to the heart of Georgina. * * * "T."

The following extract from a letter of Mr. Ward to his friend Mr. Austen, as given in Mr. Phipps's book, will show that the "castigation" of which Mr. Phipps, in a previous passage, says some of Mr. Ward's friends complained, was almost as much at

variance with the revisor's views of the matter as with theirs :—

" I got all your packets and your friendly letter safe. I shall probably, on your representations, curtail my curtailments. * * Colburn's friend's castigations did not amount to an eighth part of mine."—Phipps, ii. 114.

IX.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE"—(*continued*).

With the publication of "De Vere," in 1827, commenced my direct communication with its author, and thenceforth I shall as much as possible allow his letters to explain themselves. As, however, Mr. Ward's anonymous communications with me during the composition of "De Vere," and its progress through the press, contained many passages which furnish matter that will be of much interest to the present and future admirers of his works, and which matters belong in some sort to the literary history of the time, I shall insert here such of them as may be given without impropriety.

The MS. of "De Vere" had, by its author's express desire, been submitted to my examination volume by volume as it was composed, with a view to any suggestions or

observations I might choose to make, relative to the general conduct, as well as the details, of the story; and, in order to render intelligible the following extracts from the author's letters, it is necessary I should previously insert a portion of the observations which gave rise to them. The correspondence was in both cases addressed to the author through his publisher: for up to this time the author and myself were entirely unknown to each other even by name, and I believe he was still unknown to his publisher.

Extract of a Letter from the Reviser of "De Vere" to the Author.

* * * *

"There is, however, one defect, and to my thinking a very important one, with which I have of course not meddled, but shall point out for the reconsideration of the author; though I am aware that the remedying of it will involve considerable difficulty. I allude to his mode of commencing the tale, by the introduction of a character (Beauclerk), who has nothing whatever to do with the main story, or the per-

sons by whose agency it is subsequently worked out. The introduction of this character (to my mind, at least) produces a very awkward and unpleasant effect; not exactly at the opening of the story (for there it is of little consequence)—but the recollection of this person obtrudes itself upon the reader all through the volume at intervals, and interferes with that unity of feeling which should, and which otherwise would, prevail throughout.

"You are, of course, aware that I am speaking only of the effect produced on me throughout the *first* volume. What use, if any, may be made of Beauclerk afterwards is, of course, more than I can anticipate. But I feel certain that his introduction can at best only be got over skilfully as a *difficulty*, not turned to any good account in heightening the interest, or otherwise furthering the purposes, of the main story. * *

"Why should not the book begin in the natural way—namely, at the precise period when the *story* begins? Why should several years of De Vere's life be *anticipated*, and then cut off again, without any counterba-

lancing advantage being gained (that I can perceive) by this artificial management of the narrative? Nothing can be more objectionable in its effects, as far as they extend, than thus bringing a hero to life before his time, and producing upon the mind of the reader certain specific impressions, both mental and personal, concerning him, and then expecting us to get rid of all these impressions at once, on transferring him to another period of his life; or (still worse) permitting or compelling us to keep those impressions, and letting them interfere at every step (as they most decidedly do in the case in question) with others which should be simple, distinct, and, above all, *progressive*.

"The author of 'De Vere' will not suppose me ignorant of the occasional good effect of plunging *in medias res*. But he will also recollect the Giant Molineau's advice about 'beginning at the beginning;' and though he may very fairly say that each of these modes of commencing a story has its advantages, he will, I think, on consideration, admit that they cannot well be united.

"But we have, in fact, not merely one re-

trograde movement in the story, but two. First, there is the 'Editor's Preface,' which dates back I know not how far. Then the 'Introductory' matter, bringing us up to the visit of Beauclerk to Talbois. And then the story recommences a third time. All this strikes me as being at best superfluous. But I am certain that the circumstance of our *first impression* of De Vere being given and studiously fixed upon us, when he is a man of thirty, interferes very mischievously with all the after impressions we are called upon to receive of him. And for anything I can at present see to the contrary, this injurious effect is likely to recur at intervals all through the work. * * *

"I will only add that if, for any reason connected with those subsequent portions of the story which I have not yet seen, the author should still determine to retain the introductory 'Tour' of Beauclerk, it seems desirable that it should at least be disconnected from the main narrative, and come expressly as an 'introductory' chapter." * * *

To these observations the following reply was transmitted.

Extract of a Letter from the Author of "De Vere."

* * * *

"The *business* part of the criticism has occupied much of my thoughts; but important, and unfavourable, as I may say, it appears to be, I have at least the pleasure of not feeling embarrassed by it, so as to occasion delay. I know precisely where I agree and where I disagree; and I hope I do not flatter myself in thinking that some of his censure (that is, where he remarks on a want of *unity*)* is owing to his not having read more than half the work. To judge of the keeping of a story, it seems surely as necessary to have the whole before you as in the keeping of a picture; and no one, perhaps, could pronounce upon the latter without seeing the whole at once. Still, for all this, your friend may be right, and myself wrong. This, however, only relates to the general action of the story, which, I told you myself, I thought not so

* It was not on a "want of unity" that I had remarked, but only on a breach of the "feeling of unity" in the reader.

interesting as Tremaine. But I am sensible what I have most to consider is, his judgment of the ill tendency of the *plan*, which he thinks mischievously divides the interest.

"In part of this I agree with him, and will strive to remedy it. *In toto* I do not. Where I agree is, as to the introduction of too much machinery; and I will therefore strike out the whole of the editor's preface, and all that concerns the *personal history* of the supposed relater, Beauclerk, which, however, is very short. What your friend says is quite true. He is an *interloper*, and has nothing to do with the story as it goes on.

"Where I disagree with your friend (and I do it *questionably*, only because of my deference to him, not from the least hesitation as to my own opinion), is, where he seems to hold it as a rule that you cannot introduce a matured character in the commencement of a history, and then go back to show how that character was produced. Your friend thinks that the knowledge at once of what a man *is*, precludes interest in tracing him from what he *was*. Or, as he

describes it, as the interest depends upon watching *progressive* acquisitions and changes, it is destroyed if we know before hand at what he has arrived.

"My story is this. De Vere, at a matured period of his age, is introduced with a certain character belonging to him. Having attempted at least to interest you as to this character, I go back to his childhood (which was a most remarkable one) to show you how he came by it. What is there unnatural, or even unusual in this? As it happens, it is the very plan of Tremaine, who is introduced to you with a very particular character, full formed, and grown inveterate, and also in a very different situation as to circumstances to what he had been; and to account for it we go back* full twenty years of his life, marking all its vicissitudes. All the difference is, that in De Vere I go rather

* This *going back*, and by that and other equally objectionable means complicating his machinery, is in fact the characteristic defect of Mr. Plumer Ward's first two productions—"Tremaine" and "De Vere." In his third, "De Clifford," he has entirely avoided this defect, and the result is that, in point of construction at least, it is by far the best of his works.

more into the *details* of his childhood and his youth. All I however submit is entirely in keeping; for the child and the youth (if I have not failed, which I certainly may have done) are exactly what you would suppose the man of *six and twenty* (not as your friend, I think, supposes, *six and thirty*) to be, when introduced to the reader. I cannot help indeed supposing (as I certainly wish to believe), that your friend has made some little mistake as to this part. If he has, I fear it must be my fault. But whether so or not, he talks of what De Vere is at six and thirty, when in fact he is introduced only at six or seven and twenty, and the whole action of the story does not consume above six or eight months afterwards. But more than this, he talks of certain impressions which are made on the reader's first acquaintance with De Vere, which he is expected either to *get rid of at once* on seeing him transferred to another period of existence, or if he retains them, he feels that they interfere with other impressions which ought to be distinct. Now, if this is so, I have most sadly failed indeed, as I had, to

myself at least, an entire unity of plan; and if I hope I have preserved it, it is not from any over confidence in myself (especially against such an opinion as your friend's), but because the whole MS. has been submitted to several judgments which I entirely trust, and some of them even admire, and not one of them has complained of this want of keeping.* One of them (an excellent one) has so far agreed with the other part of your friend's criticism, as to wish Beauclerk more out of sight, especially later, where he is once, and only once, personally introduced, (and this I can easily remedy;) but none complain of introducing De Vere as he is, and then giving a retrospect of his life.

"As you have not read the MS. yourself, I will just tell you that the action attending the introduction is this:—Beauclerk, a young man on a tour, meets De Vere, who interests him much, and invites him home

* Nor did I. What I chiefly wished and proposed, and what the author finally adopted, was simply that desired by the critic referred to in the next sentence,—viz. to have Beauclerk kept more out of sight.

with him, where he interests him more. At this home he meets De Vere's mother, and two men of most opposite characters,—a world hater and a world lover,—formerly De Vere's guardians, and still contending, as it were, to bring him over to their respective opinions. Beauclerk, struck with both, and admitted to their favour, in the course of time obtains from them all the preceding story of De Vere, and having given it up to the time of making De Vere's acquaintance, he continues it till the book ends; and, from the beginning to the ending, De Vere continues the same character you would suppose him to be from the introductory description of him.

"I own myself not prepared, and even at a loss, to make out the disadvantages of such a plan. There may however be an unnecessary diversity of interest in the one or two pages respecting Beauclerk *personally*, and them I will omit; but unless I have misunderstood your friend, and he shows me that his objections are different from what I have represented them, he will not be angry with me if I cannot agree with him."

The following extracts from a second letter on the same subject are necessary to explain the rejoinder of the author of "De Vere."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM THE REVISOR TO THE AUTHOR OF "DE VERE."

"* * * * With respect to the 'machinery' which is used to introduce the story of 'De Vere,' the author and myself do not seem to differ materially; and I am most glad to find that he intends (for so I understand him) to get rid of Beauclerk altogether. If the author will only call to mind the period of momentous interest to all parties, *except Beauclerk himself*, at which this person is first introduced at Talbois, he (the author) will perceive how much worse than superfluous his presence there must be.

"The author, it appears, does not see any objection to the plan he has adopted, of introducing us to his hero at a matured period of his life, and of settling his character, and his habits of thought and feeling, in our minds, and *then* going back for many years, to show how those habits and that character

were acquired? Neither do I see any objection to this plan that might not be counterbalanced by advantages which might be made to grow out of it. But the question is—*Do* any advantages grow out of it in the case now in point? This is the question for consideration. For, *if they do not*, then the plan is objectionable, simply because it is not the natural one. Now, I do not see that any advantages grow out of the artificial plan in this instance, and, *therefore*, I object to it. It is true this plan has enabled the author to interest us *at once* in the fate and fortunes of his hero. But the question is—whether in so doing he has not unduly precipitated an interest that would have been more effective and agreeable in its natural place? * * *

Let me add, in reference to particular passages in the extract sent me, first, that I by nomeans intended to 'hold it as arule that you cannot introduce a matured character,' &c. and then go back to show how that character 'was produced,' &c. What I meant to say was, that in the instance of De Vere this plan had been carried to a

mischievous extent. I perfectly remembered that the same plan was adopted in the case of Tremaine. But I remembered also, that in that case, though the time which the reader was carried back might be many years, the retrospection was effected in a few pages, instead of (as in De Vere) THREE WHOLE VOLUMES OUT OF FOUR."

THE AUTHOR OF "DE VERE" IN REPLY TO THE FOREGOING.

"Feb. 17, 1817.

* * * * * *

"Notwithstanding the very handsome letter you have sent me from your able friend, I will confine this as much as possible to business, especially as, with the usual obstinacy of a strong first opinion, the more I think of the subject the more I am confirmed in it, and have framed my final alteration accordingly. At the same time I am really quite sorry not to have your friend's opinion with me, as it shakes my confidence in my own, though it does not convince my judgment.

"What I have done is this (for as to this

point I entirely agree with your friend)—I have annihilated Beauclerk, the *nephew*, but not the uncle, who must be still the supposed author, who meets De Vere in the way he does. Without this I must lose perhaps one of the most interesting and forcible parts of the work—certainly that which creates the whole expectation and interest to be found in the outset, which, much as I fear I prefer 'Tremaine' upon the whole, beats all the introductory part of 'Tremaine' twenty to one. However, Mr. Beauclerk himself is made to retire *hors de page* at about the 116th page of the first volume, and never appears again; so that everything then proceeds from a beginning to an end, without the least interruption or division of interest; and unity (which I so entirely agree with your friend in admiring) is quite preserved. It will then stand thus: Beauclerk brings you acquainted with De Vere, his mother, and two quondam mentors, and lays the foundation of an interest about them all, in certain scenes and conversations, which last through one hundred and sixteen pages, and no more; and he then says—Having

thus excited your curiosity about De Vere's life, I will tell you its story, from his boyish days till the most interesting part of it is over. But in doing this, observe, I have nothing more to say of myself in it, because, previous to my knowing him, I of course had no share in it; and during the few months after our first meeting, which complete the story I mean to relate, I was absent from him. Henceforward, therefore, I am only his biographer, and you will hear no more of me in person.

"This, then, is all that Beauclerk has to do with it. He then begins with the childhood of De Vere, and pursues his career through various vicissitudes of ambition and love, till both are crowned: and this ends the book.

"With unfeigned deference, therefore, but yet with confidence, I ask your friend in what is this objectionable? or, if the earlier part of De Vere's life (I mean that previous to the meeting between him and Beauclerk) consumed ten volumes instead of three, or composed the whole story one had to relate, how is the interest divided, or the plan mischievous to it? What numbers of books are

there wherein a man, at the zenith of his prosperity, writes his own life up to the moment of his telling the story. And what does Beauclerk do more than this by De Vere, after he has thoroughly introduced him to his readers? For you will please to observe, that Beauclerk is not writing *in the first days* of his acquaintance with De Vere, but in his old age, and in the way of reminiscence, long after all that composes the story is over.

"Having thus, I trust, satisfactorily explained myself, I cannot but again thank your friend for all the kind things he is pleased to say of the execution of the work, distinct from its plan, which very, very much encourages me. And as to the plan itself, I would adopt his suggestions if I could; but I think he will see that I could not make Beauclerk meet De Vere except in the precise time he did; certainly, not a few months before, as he proposes, for that would have been in the midst of the interest created by Lord Mowbray's death, when he would have been more in the way; and, if you go farther back, De Vere was abroad.

"In short, it would delight me to have

your friend's support as to the plan, if I could; but if I cannot, except against my own doctrines and decided judgment, his evident candour will excuse my pursuing the latter. I, however, quite agree with him in the general fault of all heroes and heroines, that they are paragons beyond their years; and certainly De Vere and Constance, from their matured judgments, ought to be near ten years older than they are. It is a fault, however, which, as he himself says, is necessary to all similar works, in order to combine mental with bodily perfection."

* * * * * *

Before concluding these notes and reminiscences of my anonymous communications with The Author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere," I will give part of a letter from him relative to certain personal sketches in the latter work, which cannot fail to be read with strong interest by those who are acquainted with the admirable sketches referred to, and with curiosity by all. It will scarcely be said that this letter is of a private and confidential nature, since its express and avowed object was to avoid certain unjust imputa-

tions which were in point of fact subsequently put upon the author, relative to several of the personal sketches in question—imputations which were in the highest degree obnoxious and annoying to him. These extracts are also necessary to explain what follows in the next section.

"* * * It is worth a little trouble to prevent a possible mistake, even though mistake might lead to no consequences.

"You know how glad I am that 'De Vere' in is the hands of such a man as your friend. What I wish to explain is in regard to the inscription on the old column at Talbois, in, I think, the second chapter of the first volume, and which is meant as a key to the story. It begins with—

> 'Trust in thy own good sword,
> Rather than prince's word,' &c.

"From what accompanies this, one would suppose that it was really (as stated) the composition of Edward, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford; and it has just occurred to me that a reviewer might thinkof (possibly mention) it as such. I feel it right therefore to say

that these are *imaginary* lines; though the device of the trunk of the oak making new shoots, and the motto of 'Insperata floruit,' are not.

"As I am writing I will just say a word about the possibility and the consequence of making applications of the characters to individuals of the present day. What I say in the preface is no more than true: I know not such people as Mowbray, Cleveland, or Clayton, or Oldcastle. I am not sure, however, that I could defend myself in regard to Wentworth. For though no individual answers to him exactly, it would be difficult to deny altogether that I had not distinct people in mind, in forming the different parts of his character. All the anecdotes regarding his administration, as found in the last chapter of the fourth volume, belong to Mr. Pitt; and it would not be easy to say that, in regard to the character of his eloquence, his love of letters, and all that distinguishes his conversation, in the chapter on posthumous fame, in the second volume, what is stated does not apply to Mr. Canning. Nor, if anybody finds out and marks this resemblance

in any piece of transitory criticism, do I think it would do me any credit in form to deny it,—as I could most safely all that regards Mowbray and Clayton and Cleveland, &c. Part of the Wentworth sketch, however, is formed upon the better parts of Bolingbroke's character.

"In the portrait of Lady Clanellan, on her introduction in the first volume, those who know her as well as I do may recognise the amiable Duchess of Buckingham. If they do, I cannot deny it.

"In Herbert I certainly confess my old and revered master Dr. Cyril Jackson, the former Dean of Christ Church; and many of the stories in the Man of Imagination, some perhaps also of the Man of Content (Flowerdale), may possibly be found in my own history.

"I think this is the extent of my confession; and I make it upon the same principle as a client or a patient would to his lawyer or physician, viz., the imprudence of not laying his case unreservedly before them. My extreme anxiety not to be exposed to accusations of meaning things and people which and

whom I do *not* mean, induces me thus to tell you, and your friend too, what may be safely denied and what not. Use it as, in your discretion, you may think fit; for it would seriously annoy me if any of the characters which, as I have said, are absolutely *ideal*, were applied to any particular persons.

"About those I have mentioned as prototypes I am indifferent, as they, at least, cannot feel either hurt or offended.

"The candour in which I write might make me allow that perhaps I had the old Duke of Newcastle, or part of him, in view, in Lord Mowbray; but I am not even sure of this myself. In the same manner I might mention Lord Waldegrave as Lord Clanellan; but no part of Cleveland, no part of Clayton.

"If you think this long explanation unnecessary, burn it; if not, use it with a view to my feeling upon it. I wish it, with the same view, to be shown to your cultivated friend." * * *

X.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE," &c.—(*concluded.*)

THE following letter is the first direct communication I received from Mr Plumer Ward—still, however, without his knowing me, and signed merely, "The Author of De Vere." It is in reply to one that I was compelled to address to him personally—still, however, as "the Author of De Vere"—in consequence of a matter which would be too insignificant in itself, and too ridiculously discreditable to our periodical literature, to permit of my recording it, if it were not that one of the objects of this work is to put on record such of the "secret history" of the literature of our time, in connexion with the writers referred to in these reminiscences, as may be usefully disclosed without compromising personal feelings and private interests.

I had, on the publication of "De Vere," been requested to write a critical notice of

that work, in a periodical in which I was not accustomed to write, and to which I should for personal reasons have objected to contribute, but for my great admiration of the new work, and my desire to miss no fair opportunity of publicly expressing that admiration. I had also learned, through the publisher of "De Vere," previously to the appearance of the notice in question, that the author himself had been made acquainted (though without my previous consent) with my intention of writing it. Let the reader who has perused the preceding letter judge then of my astonishment and annoyance—or rather of my indignant disgust—when, on seeing the article in print, I found interpolated into it numerous distinct references, both by name and by obvious implication, to supposed and alleged personal traits, portraits, &c., of living people, which, it was said, were "evidently" to be traced in the new work—references and allegations that I could not fail to know would give the utmost pain and annoyance to the author, coming from *any* quarter—how much more, then, coming, as he must have supposed

them to do, from one to whom he had expressly and formally denied them!

Of course, I had no alternative but to address him in explanation of the facts. The following is his reply to my letter :—

THE AUTHOR OF "DE VERE" TO HIS REVISOR.

"April 5, 1827.

"DEAR SIR,—I cannot but so address a man to whom I owe so much for his repeated kind exertions on my account; and for the gratification which (from his own mind, acquisitions, and disposition) the expression of so much of his good opinion has always afforded me.

"As to the subject of your letter, I am sure you must be confident that no excuse was necessary for entering so much into details which it has really given me very great pleasure to read; for they have completely satisfied me on a point which, I own, had moved my surprise; I mean as to the allusions (but most particularly that in regard to Lord Cleveland)—which it distressed me to read in the —— ——. At the same time, I beg to assure you I had a sort of

suspicion of the fact, particularly after having heard in Bond Street that Mr. —— had remarked there was a highly-finished character of Lord Hertford in 'De Vere.' I have not the least knowledge of Mr. ——; but knowing how fully you were aware of my extreme anxiety to protect myself from such imputations, and thinking at least that I knew you, I began not only to be very sure that you could not have inserted the passage in the —— ——, but to suspect pretty shrewdly who had.

"My concern as to the fact is certainly not diminished, but I am most truly glad that I am left fully confirmed in the notion of a discretion in yourself which certainly seemed incompatible with the procedure of which I complained. It was certainly a piece of wanton officiousness, which, after my preface, was as cruel as it was unjust.

"To touch upon a minor point, I am also glad to be set right as to certain parts of the style. In particular, the introductory sentences had not escaped me and others; and we, who had observed the general justness of

your criticisms as to language, rather wondered to find anything so unpleasing. I need not, however, beg of you not to let my opinion of Mr. ——'s conduct towards me appear to any one. It is too late to remedy it, and I wish not to hurt him by showing how much I have been hurt myself.

"As to the other explanations in your letter, I scarcely know what to say, as I feel put upon the defensive myself. I certainly, in making the confessions I did of what allusions were in my mind as to certain traits of character, had no contemplation that they could be construed to authorise their *publication*. I made them for your own information, and perhaps convenience, as if, in the course of conversations or comments with or from others, you found it necessary to give any opinion upon the subject of allusions, I thought that, by knowing what I *did* mean, you might be better able to manage those who might impute to me what I did not mean. I cannot recollect my letter, but as Mr. ——. put upon it the same construction as you did, I must suppose that I at least

expressed myself awkwardly, and that there must have been even a wide opening for such construction. I am, however, become rather more indifferent about it, since I have seen some of the parties, especially the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham, who have acquitted me of any share in the direction of the public attention to them, and can scarcely take ill any *secret* conceptions I may have had of what, at least, can do them no dishonour. Indeed, since my interview with them, they have put me so much at my ease upon the subject, that I beg we may think no more of it.

" Not so of the sincere feeling of obligation which I experience more than ever towards you, for the kind and active zeal you have shown about 'De Vere' and 'Tremaine,' to say nothing of the great benefit I have derived from your abilities, so strikingly shown as your criticism proceeded. May I not add (I surely hope I may), that this is enhanced by the impression (I know not whether well or ill founded) that something like *personal* good-will has grown on your side, as it certainly has on mine, as we have

proceeded together in our mutual communications. With this impression, I beg you to believe me,

"My dear Sir,

"Your much obliged and

"Faithful servant,

"THE AUTHOR OF 'DE VERE.'

"As Mr. —— seemed much interested about our subject, I send this open through him. He will learn by it that I enter completely into your explanations in regard to the —— ——."

XI.

MY FIRST DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH MR. PLUMER WARD.

THE following letter is the first addressed to me by Mr. Plumer Ward in his own name. It was occasioned by one that I had addressed himself directly and by name, through the medium of a mutual friend; for he had now avowed the authorship of those works of which, until such avowal, he had scarcely been suspected, except among his most intimate friends.

The occasion of my addressing him was one exactly similar to that which had called forth the preceding explanation and letter, and though not quite so discreditable in its character, it rendered an explanation on my part equally necessary as in the preceding instance. The review I had written, in the present instance, was that to which his letter at p. 42 refers, and in preparing which I had expressed, in still stronger terms than I had used to the author himself, my opinions

as to what I deemed the defective and objectionable points in the conduct of the story, as it had finally left the hands of the author. On seeing the article in print, however, I found that not only had all the portions of it just referred to been omitted, but passages had been interpolated expressing opinions I had not expressed, and did not hold.

As the absolute identity of all the *favourable* portions of this article with the written opinions I had given of "De Vere" to its publisher rendered it impossible for the author (to whom *all* my opinions had been transmitted) to doubt that the review was mine, it was evidently even more indispensable for me to explain to him the real state of the case in this instance than in the other; for the first only involved a question of courtesy and good feeling, whereas the second involved one of common honesty.

In giving to the world two letters so purely personal to myself as the following and that which precedes it, I am doubtless subjecting myself to a charge of egotism. But the charge, even if warranted, will not be urged in an unkind and disparaging spirit,

except by those who are unlucky enough to fail in appreciating the true character of documents which there would have been at least as much egotism in suppressing as there is in giving.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Whitehall, May 7, 1827.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have many and sincere apologies to make you for not having much sooner answered your kind and interesting letter, delivered to me by Captain Williams, though I sent you a message through him, which I hope he delivered the next day (as he promised), thanking you for it, as I heartily did, till I could do so under my own hand. A sick daughter, and some very absorbing public business connected with the present changes, must be my excuse for not having sooner done what I now endeavour to do.

"At the same time, it was not very easy to answer you as I wished, that is, to tell you how much I have really felt your kindness, as well as valued your approbation, in respect to 'Tremaine' and De 'Vere.' In truth,

I may say, from appreciating your talents as I ought, that that approbation was a very great impetus to much of my late literary exertion, and that the indication of your good opinion of the earlier parts of 'De Vere' gave me an encouragement to go through with it, which I might otherwise have wanted.

"I am free to say also, that, though we have sometimes differed on a few points of criticism, I have, for the most part, reaped the greatest possible benefit from your valuable emendations. You may, suppose, therefore, how much I enter into the feelings of your letter, and how much I wish to mark my sense of it.

"And yet, if I may say so consistently with my real deference for those feelings which only do honour to your sensibility and independence of mind, I almost wondered you could think what you complain of (just as your complaint is) of consequence sufficient to have given you the anxiety it evidently has. As far as regards myself, I assure you no explanation whatever was necessary; for never for one moment could I tax the kind critic I was so long, though

anonymously, thrown with, as a man capable of compromising the independence of his opinions. The whole strain and tenour of your various communications with me proved the complete contrary. So much so, that when, on reading the review in the ——, my first impulse was a wish to convey my thanks to you for its kind mention of 'De Vere,' I checked myself, from the remembrance that I had almost hurt you by offering something of the same kind on the review of 'Tremaine.'

"Be assured, therefore, that, although I did not find what I expected—some reassertion of the opinions on the plan and other parts of 'De Vere' on which we had essentially differed—I by no means set it down to any compromise you had made of your sincerity. In fact, I rather hoped, particularly from what I thought some faint signs of it in our last communications, that if you had not entirely come round to *me*, you had begun at least so far to doubt of your own criticism, as to have suppressed the desire of promulgating it as a thing on which you still rested satisfied. I am perhaps a little sorry that

this is not quite the fact, but beg to repeat, that the explanation you have thought it worth while to give, on the score of consistency, was not necessary. I never thought you *could* be inconsistent.

"As little, on the ground of self-defence, was it necessary to explain the omissions which you complain of; though I am free to own, when I perceive how important the passages omitted would have been to what I had at heart, I could complain too. I, however, am glad to think that the opinion of the thinking part of the world goes always with the sentiments which have been expunged, for the detail of which I much thank you. I wish the omission had not occurred; but I am more at my ease, if not quite so, on the score of *applications*.

"In respect to what was interpolated in the beginning of the review, you have been very condescending in showing so much anxiety about it. But I assure you, from any feeling it might have caused in myself, *that* explanation was also unnecessary. Had the passages been *yours*, I should only have thought you right in expressing the

little blame they contain; and all through I am but too happy in thinking that I can have written anything that has been so little blamed, either by you or your brother critics.

"Having replied, I think, to the most essential parts of your letter (essential, I mean, as they regard criticism), permit me again to thank you for all the kind passages of your letter, which regard me personally in a manner very much to gratify me. I assure you the esteem you profess for a mind which so entirely esteems your own, is too creditable to me not to feel proud of it. I cannot, however, permit you to suppose that on my side it will be only transitory, while on yours it will be permanent. Being mutual, and (I trust, as I hope) springing from the same causes—similarity of tastes and principles—I am at a loss, as well as sorry, to think you can suppose there can be any difference.

"The air of melancholy which hangs over the concluding sentence of your letter is the only part of it which is at all unwelcome. I will trust, my dear Sir, that there is no real cause for it, but that it may be a passing

cloud, to which all of us (and literary persons by no means excepted) are often, though temporarily, subject.

"Believe me, with much esteem,
"Dear Sir, your obliged
"And faithful servant,
"R. P. WARD."

XII.

MR. WARD LEAVES ENGLAND.—DOMESTIC CALAMITIES.—LETTERS OF R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE FROM LAUSANNE.

In 1832, the dangerous illness of Mr. Ward's youngest and only remaining daughter caused their temporary removal to Brighton, where Mr. Ward became acquainted with the lady whom he afterwards married.* A lengthened residence abroad ensued, and my intercourse with Mr. Ward was interrupted first, by this absence, and afterwards by the prostration of mind which followed the death of the daughter just alluded to. This last domestic calamity—the crowning one of a series of almost unexampled severity (first, the loss of two beautiful, gifted, and accomplished daughters, within two days of each other; then of a dear wife; and, lastly, of this only remaining daughter)—so deeply

* Mrs. Okeover, the widowed daughter of General Sir George Anson, Bart.

affected both the bodily and mental health of Mr. Ward, that he was induced by his physicians again to leave England.

This expedient, his fortunate union with the lady above alluded to, and his subsequent resort to literary composition, at length restored him to that equable and happy condition of mind which was constitutional with him; and the speedy result of his recovery was a new work, entitled "Illustrations of Human Life," published in 1837.

Mr. Ward, while still abroad (at Lausanne) had instructed his publisher not to allow his new work (then in the press) to appear till it had been submitted to my perusal. This brought on an immediate renewal of our intercourse; and thenceforth our correspondence and personal intimacy were uninterrupted up to the period of his death, in 1846. From this date, therefore (the latter end of 1836), my materials for these Memorials of the latter years of Mr. Plumer Ward's life become so rich in matter from his own pen, that I gladly withdraw from all further share in them, beyond those few and brief elucidatory notes and memoranda which may, from time

to time, seem necessary to clear or to connect the selections I shall make from his letters.

I will merely premise, with reference to Mr. Ward's desire that I should see his new work, that, with a diffidence in regard to his literary powers and pretensions, which I have never seen approached in any other man holding anything like the rank and position he had *now* attained, Mr. Ward thought proper to consult me on points (so to speak) of the common law and practice of the literature of the day, on the same principle that the most consummate statesman, the profoundest philosopher, or the most learned divine consults his humble solicitor or his ordinary medical adviser—simply because he knows that *they* have made their respective professions the study and business of their lives, and that *he* has not. And as the clients in the cases I have instanced take good care (at least, if they are wise) to judge for themselves as to the adoption of the advice offered or the opinion expressed, so did Mr. Ward—never adopting any changes that might be proposed to him, unless his taste was satisfied or his reason convinced.

I hope I may be excused for adding, on my own behalf, that I never approached the author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere," as an adviser or a critic, without feelings of mingled admiration and deference that would have prevented me from so approaching him at all, but for that almost affectionate personal regard which his treatment of me, from the very commencement of our intercourse, had by this time so strengthened and confirmed, as to level (to all outward results, I mean) the great distinctions between us, both as to social and intellectual rank and position.

The following is the first letter I received from Mr. Ward after his domestic calamities and his consequent residence abroad:—

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Lausanne, Dec. 9, 1836.

"MY DEAR MR. PATMORE,—I have had the truest pleasure in seeing your handwriting again, not merely from the gratifying things you are pleased to say of me, for which, thinking them sincere, I sincerely thank you; but because what I most wished is accomplished, and you *are* again in com-

munication with ——, whom I have often assured him could never get a more able ally. Long before I left England, and since too, I applied to him for your address, wishing much to consult you on my embryo work. But he knew it not, and I have been forced to act without your valuable assistance. However, having recovered my health and spirits in a great measure, I was glad to employ my leisure as you say, and shall continue to do so if I continue well.

"I have been delighted with Germany and the Germans, high and low. Not so with the Swiss, though much with their country. In this I am like Rousseau.

"I have a little treatise on Enthusiasm, which I wish I could show you, but this distance is untoward.

"We shall be home in June, which I am sorry for, but my little step-son (I don't know whether you saw him at Gilston) has been left heir to his uncle Okeover, and succeeds to a landed property and Okeover Hall, full 5000*l.* a year, his mother being guardian; so we must return.

"Do you mark the coincidence of his name

with that in 'De Vere,' when I wrote which I did not know it was in existence.

"Pray let me know where I can address you. We stay here till spring, and then for Paris.

"Sincerely yours,
"R. P. W."

The Essay on Enthusiasm, alluded to in the foregoing letter, was afterwards published in the "Pictures of the World." Plumer Ward never wrote anything more thoroughly characteristic of himself than this Essay—anything, I mean, more strikingly illustrative of his own personal character, which blended those seeming opposites, the Enthusiast and the Man of the World, in a degree and to a result that have rarely been equalled in any other case—each so moulding and tempering the other, that they formed together a working amalgam more happily fitted to the purposes and ends of actual life than anything but such a union could have produced.

The coincidence to which Mr. Ward alludes in this letter respecting Okeover Hall is one of those really remarkable ones, of which

several seem to have occurred to him in his remarkable life. It is thus alluded to in Mr. Phipps's Memoir :—

"Among the most pleasing passages in 'De Vere' is the description of the Man of Content, the 'Master of Okeover Hall.' By one of the strange coincidences that are stranger than fiction, Mr. Ward, while searching a road-book for an appropriate name for the abode of this, one of his favourite characters, had fixed on Okeover Hall. Years after this, and by events subsequent to his marriage, he saw himself, in right of his wife, as the guardian of her only son, the 'Master of Okeover Hall;' and most assuredly, in the peaceful life and social circle there established, he realised, in the best sense of the word, the 'Man of Content.'"—*Phipps*, ii. 187.

But the most interesting point in this coincidence Mr. Phipps has not noticed. I allude to the fact (distinctly avowed by Mr. Ward in a previous letter), that many of the incidents in the life of Flowerdale, the "Master of Okeover Hall," are founded on passages in Mr. Ward's own career.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Lausanne, March 1, 1837.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter, though dated the 19th, is only just arrived, and I lose not a moment in telling you what pleasure it gives me. It would be the grossest affectation not to say that it pleased me in every way I could wish; for I know your sincerity, as well as your ability and powers of judging, and this, set off with its most friendly tone, left me nothing to desire. I shall be too happy if the world agree with you in half of what you are pleased to say. * * * *

"As I am serious in all this,* I will thank you much if in confidence you will advise me as to a publisher,—Murray, Saunders and Otley, Bentley, or any other. I will keep your secret. I am particularly annoyed that you have not seen 'Rheindorf,'† which I think is of a higher cast than my others; and if an author can judge of himself, I think 'Sterling' (the miseries of ambition beyond your place) a very impressive moral

* The matters here alluded to have been omitted.

† Then in MS.

tale. On both these I long for your opinion. * * * * I have been so selfish as to notice these comparative trifles before adverting to much the most serious part of your letter, which gave me great and sincere concern. Your account of yourself is alarming, and scarcely allayed by the little consolatory improvement with which you end.

"* * * I wish you had consulted me about them,* at least if I could have

* I suppose this allusion refers to something I may have said in the letter to which this is a reply, relative to certain unlucky differences between a well-known publisher and myself, arising out of legal proceedings that I had been compelled to take against him, and which, in causing a separation between us, had for the moment greatly reduced my income. In allowing these and other similar expressions of feeling on the part of Mr. Ward, as to the worldly as well as literary position of the person addressed, to remain uncancelled, I do so simply because they are characteristic of their writer—in whom there was an apparent (for it was only an apparent) inconsistency on points of this nature. With the simplest natural tastes, and the sincerest love for those pleasures and pursuits which money cannot purchase, or place and position promote, he had nevertheless acquired, by a life-long association with the great and wealthy, and with scarcely any others, the most magnificent notions and habits as to income and expenditure—notions and habits which, until quite late in life, when he came into possession of the large Gilston

spared you any part of the unpleasantness of them. My friendship for men I liked much

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property, had caused his own pecuniary resources, considerable as they always were, to fall very far short of those wants which his lavish tastes and generous temper called into play. The position which his friendly interest and partiality describe (somewhat strongly) in a subsequent letter as "a downright disgrace to the world," and which he elsewhere speaks of in similar terms that have been allowed to stand for the reason above assigned, was and is one with which its holder is and ever has been perfectly content, because he has felt and feels it to be fully and fairly proportioned to the amount of literary ability and exertion applied in acquiring and maintaining it. The truth is, that although the simple-hearted and innocent *Jack Careless*, leaning over his low garden wall in gossip with his rustic village neighbours; the clear-thoughted, heart-whole, happy *Flowerdale*, in his wise retirement from the world; and the earnest and philosophic enthusiast *Manners*, in his half-voluntary, half-reluctant solitude—although these, and particularly the latter, were the ideals of Mr. Ward's likings among the numerous personal portraits scattered through his works, and those with which he was most pleased to find himself assimilated—there is no denying, nor is there now any reason to conceal, that the proud and fastidious *Tremaine*, the stately and magnificent *Rochfort*, and even the smooth, polished, courtly, accomplished, and somewhat worldly-minded *Herbert*, partake not a little of that self-painting which is one of the great secrets of the success of most modern works of fiction—by "modern" meaning those of our own immediate day—not to mention all modern poetry—beginning with *Childe Harold* and ending with *In Memoriam*.

less than you has cost me dear, which you will believe when I tell you that in the last two years it has drained me of full 6000*l.*, which I shall never see. Your letter made me say to myself, how hard that some of this had not been applied where it would not only have told so much better, but gratified me so much more.

"It is most material to your health, to your talents, and your exertions for your family, that this accursed dependence upon —— should be put an end to. Without it, you will never do yourself justice. You tell me you are indeed out of fear; but can you be so if not out of bonds?

"For ourselves we think of returning, after a few weeks at Paris, whither we have fixed to proceed on the 14th. But here again ——'s most annoying conduct interferes; for, as I cannot stir till I have news of the work, and indeed am waiting for some copies, and the gentleman treats me with somewhat less attention than one of his devils, I am left altogether without chart and compass till he pleases to allow them.

"About May, however, we hope to be in

England, though probably not at Gilston; for not only I established my son and his eight children there when I left it, but many things combine to make me think I shall not return. In the first place, it has been the tomb of three beings whom I loved better than myself, and every bed and chamber in it is the bed of sickness or chamber of death,—full, therefore, of most unhappy associations. This, added to the radicalism of many of my neighbours, would indispose me to live again at Gilston if I could avoid it; and with these thoughts it does so happen that my little step-son Okeover, whom I believe you saw at Gilston, has just succeeded, by the death of his uncle, to Okeover Hall and Park, together with near 6000*l.* a-year, in Staffordshire, and his mother being guardian, the trustees offer us the Hall till he comes of age; and as this would be her family place, and mine would be only hers for the short space of life that remains to me, we think seriously of leaving my son at Gilston, and living at her son's, which I am told is a most beautiful spot. But all this is but

embryo, and cannot be matured till we are on the spot.

"Adieu. If you can write so as that I can receive it on or before the 13th, pray direct here. Meantime believe me, with great truth, your obliged,

"R. P. W."

XIII.

MR. WARD'S RETURN TO ENGLAND.—HIS LAST LETTERS FROM GILSTON.

EARLY in the summer of 1837, Mr. Plumer Ward returned to England, in renewed health and spirits, and took up his residence for a short time at Gilston Park, though, for reasons glanced at so characteristically in the foregoing letter, he never again made it his permanent residence, and not long afterwards quitted it entirely—giving it up to his son, Sir H. G. Ward, the present Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, and himself residing at Okeover Hall, Staffordshire, the family seat of his step-son, Mr. Charles Okeover, then a minor under the guardianship of his mother, Mrs. Plumer Ward.

The following are Mr. Ward's last letters to me from Gilston :—

R. Plumer Ward to P. G. Patmore.

"Gilston Park, July 18, 1837.

"Dear Patmore,—I shall be too happy to oblige you in anything in my power; but I am a little puzzled to make out whether your fawn is to be killed for eating, or to be bred up as a pet. As soon as I received your letter, I summoned my keeper. Hear what he says—'If the gentleman wishes to eat, I can easily kill; but if to have a pet, the only chance is that there may be yet one to drop, as it is impossible to catch them alive if once they can run.' So pray tell me which is your wish, and, if for the table, you may depend upon one directly. * *

"I have been visited by such a return of my old complaint, dyspepsia, that Halford has commanded me to Bath, to which I should have gone by this, but for very great distress we have been in from the threatened loss of Mrs. P. W.'s only daughter. We hope, however, she is now out of danger; and, as soon as we can leave her, my good wife will accompany me to Bath. I have such frequent pain, that if that fails, I shall seek the

Brunnens once more, or perhaps Nice, for the winter. Four months' east wind have saddened my life. Believe me with truth,

"Dear Patmore,

"Much yours,

"R. P. Ward."

The allusion relative to his tale entitled "Sterling" (then in MS.), in the first paragraph of the following letter, refers to a suggestion I had made to Mr. Ward, that the subject and materials would well bear to be treated as a separate work in three volumes, instead of the one volume which it afterwards formed in the "Pictures of the World."

The allusion in the last paragraph is to his "Essay on the Revolution of 1688," which he was then composing, and which was shortly afterwards published in two volumes octavo.

R. Plumer Ward to P. G. Patmore.

"Gilston Park, July 21, 1837.

"Dear Patmore,—Thank you for your agreeable letter—agreeable to an author, if ever there was one, for it is full of the

most delicate flattery, or (if that shocks you) encomiums, which who can withstand? My wife's word is perhaps the best, 'encouragement,' for much certainly does it encourage me; but my head is at present so full of political lore (not modern, but of the Revolution), that I do not think I could recal enough of 'Sterling' to proceed upon your valuable hint. But as it is, I am really grateful to you, and elevated too in consequence of your opinion, which, you know, I always think a faithful barometer. * * *

"You see that I have been selfish enough to begin with *my* business—now for *yours*. Tell me when you would have the fawn killed and sent, and it shall be done. I really did not know before that it was ever served up as a table delicacy, and only wish I could have profited by the knowledge before thinning was over. The spring was so cold and backward that we have been forced to postpone venison till the middle or end of next month, and therefore prefer the fawn to the haunch.

"I will seriously think what may be done to 'Sterling;' but I am anything but a

lover just now, and would much rather discuss the legality of Lord Russell's execution, which I am quite sure of proving, as well as that Fox was the most unfair and prejudiced of *embryo* historians—for he was no more.

"But as dinner is served, you must excuse more than thanks for your letter. And so believe me,

"Ever much yours,

"R. P. W."

Up to the period of his retirement from political life, Mr. Ward's desultory reading (as I have hinted elsewhere) had been almost exclusively confined to writers preceding those of the present century; and though, on recovering his beloved leisure, he read with avidity most of the good novels and works of travel of the day, his reading did not extend to the critics and essayists of the nineteenth century, and almost as little to its poets. Nevertheless, he felt great interest and curiosity about several of them, and was especially fond of conversing about them with any one who happened to enjoy their personal acquaintance. The following letter

refers to a small portion of my personal recollections of the late William Hazlitt, that I had noted down shortly after his death. Mr. Ward had heard that I was preparing them, and had expressed a strong wish to see the MS. As they form a subsequent part of the present work, I may perhaps be excused for inserting Mr. Ward's opinion on them.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Gilston Park, Aug. 11, 1837.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am afraid you will have thought me long in answering your letter, but pray don't think me negligent.

"I read your sketch with avidity—with a pleasure quite intense, and I read it immediately. But I have been more occupied, and worried too, by a rascally attorney, who has contracted for a part of my Suffolk property, and who will neither pay for it nor let me off. When I tell you he has broken six appointments to settle, and is as far off as ever, you may guess how he has plagued me.

"Certainly, among other inconveniences, he has prevented me from writing, though

not from reading you, and I am quite delighted.

"I have not a scruple in saying, by all means *publish*, and that soon.

"As you say you will follow my opinion, doing me the honour to add you confide in it, I give it you without reserve. There is a little verbal criticism, towards the end, which you will at once find out in the shape of sentences (or rather a sentence or two), seemingly involved (from lengthenings), which I presume to point out to your observation. In all other respects the style is clear, forcible, and often pathetic—as becomes the subject; and as for the subject itself, few things are more interesting.

"Your first picture of him fixed me. Nothing I have seen of yours, or anybody's else, could be more graphic. All the incidents, too, are made the most of, and we only wish there were more. So says General Phipps (by no means a bad judge), who was charmed with it, though he never heard of Hazlitt except by name, and disliked him. On the strength of your sketch, however, he immediately set to reading him, and is so

pleased, that he means to purchase him as soon as he returns to London. I hope this will determine you to publish. * * * *

"P.S.—We leave home on Wednesday, and I hope to show Mrs. Plumer Ward Oxford and the Wye before we return.

"I took your hint as to the colour of the Conservatory, and the success is beyond imagination."*

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* The Conservatory had hitherto been painted green, all the rest of the building being of stone colour, and I had suggested that the two should be made to harmonize.

XIV.

MR. PLUMER WARD AND "CHATSWORTH."—HIS LETTERS TO P. G. PATMORE.—HIS "ESSAY ON THE REVOLUTION."

THE following letter relates to a tale of the olden times, which forms one of a series since published, with a modern framework, under the title of "Chatsworth; or, the Romance of a Week," a work which Mr. Plumer Ward benefited by many valuable suggestions while in MS., and honoured by the sanction of his name as editor.

As this work was, on its publication, distinctly and almost universally attributed, by its numerous critics, to Mr. Ward himself, and has since his death been formally described as "his latest work," in several biographical memoirs appearing in periodicals issuing from respectable quarters, it will be proper for me to show, at more length than I should otherwise have thought of doing, the true nature of his connexion with that

work, and luckily I am able to do so in his own words. It does not, however, seem necessary that I should, for this purpose, disturb the chronological order in which I have thought it best to arrange Mr. Ward's letters. The other references to "Chatsworth" and its editorship will therefore come in their proper places.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Chesterfield Street, March 13, 1838.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—I opened your romance at nine o'clock last night, but could not leave it till I had read every word. This will prove its interest, for few are more sleepy or sooner in bed than myself. I have much to say upon it, and all favourable, except perhaps a word or two as to the machinery, in which, too, I may be wrong. Imprimis, the foundation of the story is highly original, and, as such, adds greatly to the interest. How did you come by it? Is there anything like it in any old legend, or is it a legend of your own? Any way, it possesses the very first requisite of a story, *interest;* and hence I am quite against you

in thinking it will not be popular. I would have you publish it by all means.

"So much for the subject. Then, as to the execution, there are many things to admire. First, the simplicity of the style, which always most befits a *narration*, which this essentially is. You let the characters speak for themselves; and we know nothing, want nothing, of the author till all is over. This, I imagine, is exactly as it should be. In this, and other things, it resembles the episodical novels in Don Quixote. Could you wish for anything better? * * *

"The groundwork of the story is not only most impressive in itself, but preserved in high keeping throughout. 'Servitur ad imum'—perhaps the most important of the rules of criticism. The commencing point of interest, the rocks, is striking, and very pleasing in itself, but grows more and more so as the story advances. Dorigen catching at their removal as *the* impossible thing, which yet would so gratify her, could it be performed, as to make her forget the consequence, is a great beauty. The whole scene afterwards between her and her hus-

band, on their appalling gradual disappearance as the tide rises, is felicitous. The simple solution of the phenomenon, too, from natural causes, is equally so; also the apparent mystery that sheds itself about the student in the meeting between him and Aurelius.

"The *dénouement* is not less agreeable for being unexpected. To tell you the truth, I was prepared for something very terrible. I thought the student was the devil, the price of the secret the soul of Aurelius, and the catastrophe of Dorigen a death like Lucretia's. The finale, however, is more pleasing for not being so shocking; and there is wildness enough in the romantic cast of the events, and particularly in the source of them (a superstitious adherence to a vow), to gratify the utmost avarice for the wonderful.

"So much for the attractive in this attractive composition; nor do I know anything in the least of a contrary character, though I may venture a few suggestions with a view, to my mind, to make it more perfect. In the first place, the whole of the interest and

character of the story have for their base what, in these modern times, we are so little accustomed to feel, namely, superstitious reverence for a vow, and a still more superstitious horror at breaking it, that I think you ought to have employed more time and labour in impressing it upon your readers, preparatory to what is to be engrafted upon it. As it is, the ground is not sufficiently laid. * * *

"One little want of keeping (easily remedied) I will mention in Dorigen. She listens too soon, and with too little resentment at first, to Aurelius. My own impression (and this is what you want) was, that her sudden sympathy was quite incompatible with her previous character and delicate love for her husband. I almost thought her faithless, and about to be won over to infamy. But this, as I said, may be easily remedied by bestowing a little more time upon her first surprise and resentment, and gradual recovery from it, say from the apprehension that Aurelius was mad rather than wicked.

"Another omission (it is no more) strikes me [as advisable]. Arviragus is a great deal

and too suddenly complaisant, too easy about the fulfilment of a vow which is to destroy his happiness and dishonour his wife. Nothing but the most terrific dread of the gods, for breaking a vow ought to produce this easy sacrifice. Even with that dread, he should be anything but calm. Dorigen also ought to be more determined and threatening as to her self-sacrifice, in case Aurelius insisted upon her vow.

"If you think these hints are worth pursuing, a very little attention will make them available. * * *

"There! I think you will allow I have given you at least an honest opinion as to merits and oversights—the first really most attractive, the last merely what I have called them, and most easily remedied.

"If I were not greatly pleased, I could not bring myself to such a long letter—the longest I have written for many a year. If your comedy is as good as your romance, I shall have pleasure in writing another; but this must be deferred, and so no more at present from yours, very truly,

"R. P. W."

I trust the reader will bear with me when I feel occasionally called upon, as in the cases of the foregoing letter, to refer to matters in which I am too intimately concerned to admit of my speaking of them without being liable to the charge of egotism. It has been with a reluctance almost insurmountable that I have at any time incurred this charge; but the alternative would have been the suppression of letters that I am confident the readers of these Memorials would not willingly miss. I need scarcely add, that all the hints in the foregoing letter were adopted.

The following note alludes to Mr. Ward's "Essay on the Revolution of 1688," then just published.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Chesterfield Street, Mayfair, April 4, 1838.

"So you wish I had never quitted *fiction* for *party*, and that you had not met me 'in the crowd and crush of politics!' And you did not write the no-review, but really *Patmore's Lament*, in the —— ——? Not you! As if I did not at once find you out by your style.

"Have you seen the skimmed milk and water trash in the —— upon me? It is not at all offensive, but such stuff, both as to argument and criticism, that I really feel for the writer, who seems unfit almost for *any* critique, much less to grapple with what he has undertaken. If I have no more powerful opponent than he, I shall be well off. Bulwer, I believe, announces himself as one. We shall see.

"R. P. W."

XV.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.—"ESSAY ON THE REVOLUTION."—MR. READE'S "ITALY."

SEVERAL of the letters in this section refer to a controversial pamphlet by Mr. Ward, published anonymously, in December, 1838, in reply to some strictures in the "Edinburgh Review" on his work entitled "Essay on the Revolution of 1688." As Mr. Ward thought it essential to his object that he should strictly preserve his incognito for a time, I willingly undertook all the business details connected with this matter, in which, as will be seen by the subsequent letters, he felt a strong interest—as, indeed, his temperament impelled him to do in everything in which he seriously occupied himself. I am not sure whether he afterwards avowed the authorship of this *brochure* beyond the circle of his immediate family and private friends. But as there can be no conceivable reason for any longer concealing a step which the nature of the attack almost compelled him

to take, and as his share in the controversy was marked by great argumentative skill and critical acumen, with but few of those "ills" which usually attend controversial writing, I have not thought it right to withhold such details as his own letters furnish relative to a matter which belongs to the literary history of our day.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Ashbourn, Oct. 18, 1838.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—I have taken a liberty with you, which I hope and trust, from your long shown friendship, you will excuse. The very silly arguments and gross misrepresentations of the 'Edinburgh Review' on my 'Essay on the Revolution,' joined to its general rudeness, made me resolve to do, what you will perhaps think a foolish thing,—review the review. But as I did not like to do this in my own name, nor wish to go to the expense of printing it in a separate form, I addressed it to ——, without my name, to publish it in his magazine, if he chose; if not, to send it to your house. If you get it, I do not venture to ask you to read it, for the subject is not to your taste;

but, if you know any other channel by which it may be published, I will be thankful for your advice. If not, be so good as to keep it till further advice.

"Should —— address any note to the author, will you forward it here, where, you will be glad to hear, I am revelling in a house and a real country life very much to my taste, which Gilston, with all its charms, was not. I am only sorry that its distance (150 miles) precludes, I fear, my hope that you will come to see me. The place belongs to my step-son, and to us till he is of age, eight years hence.

"We shall be in town, in Chesterfield-street, in February.

"Have you done anything with your tale, or your play? I want to see both in print.

* * * * * *

"Pray write and tell me what you are doing, and believe me always much yours,

"R. P. Ward."

The opening paragraph of the following letter refers to Mr. Edmund Reade's beautiful poem of "Italy," then just published :—

R. Plumer Ward to P. G. Patmore.

"Okeover Hall, Ashbourn, Nov. 11, 1838.

"My dear Patmore,—I find I am indebted to your partiality for a book of poems, exhibiting, I think, warmth and genius, though perhaps wanting some pruning. The book was sent me by Mr. Reade, with a flattering letter, owing, I fear, more to your kind opinion than 'Tremaine,' though attributed to both. Well, thank you for this and many other instances of your kindness.

"I wrote you some time ago with a twofold view, of knowing what had become of a certain tale and comedy, neither of which ought to be hid under a bushel; also to apprise you that I had sent a review of the 'Edinburgh Review' of my political work, to ——, with a request that if he did not publish it, he would send it to you to be returned to the author, for I did not tell my name. As there was scarcely time to publish it in the last magazine of ——, and I have heard nothing from you about it, it is possible he retains it for his next publication; but I should like to know if you have heard anything about it.

"Tell me what you have been about, and where. Perhaps you are abroad, or enjoying the sun (if you can find him, at least) out of London. *My* sun is only that of my imagination, for the real one is nowhere here. We have, however, a delightful coal-pit, which almost does as well.

"If you will answer this letter, and excuse the trouble it gives you, you will make me very glad.

"I will not add to it more than to say I am much yours, R. P. WARD."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Nov. 18, 1838.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—Your letter, as all your letters do, only added to my obligations to you. I cannot thank you enough for the trouble you have taken for me with ——, who may be a very good Tory, but certainly understands little of good manners. I am neither surprised nor disappointed by his thinking the papers not available, for I did not expect they would suit his publication. Still he might have returned them with less delay.

"The question is, what is to be done; for I own I think the Edinburgh wight so ignorant and cowardly in his critique, as well as so malapert, that I wish much for the publication, late as it is. I would be very glad, therefore, to profit by your more extensive experience and judgment in these matters, and would give you a *carte blanche* as to the means of bringing out the critique, short of revealing my name, which, if I did, I would do it in form, as a regular answer; but this many things forbid.

"Upon this I would ask your advice how to proceed, though the work, I fear, is too long for a magazine, and too short for a pamphlet. If, however, you think it may do, and you have interest to effect it (which you, of course, have, so well and advantageously known), London or Edinburgh would be the same to me. I fear this would give you the trouble of looking into it, which I by no means wished to impose upon you.

"As to your own MS., I am quite sorry to perceive your unwillingness or fear to bring them out. I sincerely think you ought to do so, both for your own and the public's

sake. I augur the best for them if only for this, that I cannot keep them from running in my head, crammed as it is with things very different. I told you I thought the comedy very like those of Congreve, and quite equal to many of them; and as for the tale, I have the rocks and the tides, and the castle, and the lady-wife watching for her lord, and distracted by her vow, oftener before me than you may perhaps imagine. It may not possibly suit the trifling, superficial taste of the day; but it has the genius of the old romance, which I think we have too much banished, preferring the frippery of modern pictures of mere outside manners to imagination and mind. Pray think a little more about it, and at least consult Macready. I shall be glad to know the result.

"I am here still in my hollow-tree—a most comfortable one—caring nothing for the world, which I have outlived. Why should I, when I am absolutely so blessed by Heaven at home? How lucky, too, that I am fond of all our connexions who abound

about us, and make our retreat very pleasing. My son is very welcome to all the cockneys and radicals of Herts. I never felt a real country gentleman before. Staffordshire for ever, says your obliged friend, R. P. W.

"P.S.—Do you remember Lady Louisa Anson the day you dined with me? The Anson family are all going to have rare doings on her marriage, in a week or two, at Shugborough, her father's fine place. Whether from philosophy or fear of rheumatism, I have declined going, but duly send my family and wife. Yet I should like it, for there will be many Lady Lauras there, though I fear not one Isabel.

"By the way, did I ever tell you who Isabel was? Partly (whether you believe it or not) ——; chiefly, however, Lady ——, the earl's wife, whom I met in Nassau, and not a word too much for her."

The "Lady Laura" and "Isabel" referred to in the postscript of the foregoing letter are two characters in "Illustrations of Human Life," the latter one of the most exquisite creations of a pen that has never

been surpassed (at all events, among prose writers) in its delineations of the female character. I do not know why I should leave the names of the living originals in blank; but I dare not print them without the permission of their owners, and should not obtain that permission if I were to ask it.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Dec. 3, 1838.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—I wish, among the many benefits you have conferred upon me, you would tell me how to thank you as I ought, for I cannot do it myself. In human affairs, whatever it may be among the angels, I do not accede to the sentiment of Milton, that by owing we owe not—at best a sort of quibble; so that, unless you can teach me how to acquit myself, I must continue to owe.

"Meanwhile, all I can do is cordially to thank you. You have had a sad deal of trouble, but I know it will have been lightened by your good will. Like 'Macbeth' I can say—

"'I know this is a joyful trouble to ye,
But yet 'tis one.'

You have, however, shown your skill in diplomacy admirably, and Lord Palmerston would be glad of you, for much he seems to want able negotiators.

" You are most good in offering to superintend the proofs. Were the distance from this shorter, I would by no means think of imposing that additional burthen upon you; but after all the delays that have occurred, I am fearful of more; which certainly could not be avoided, where there is not time to answer a letter by return of post; so that if you are not tired out, my dear Patmore, I will thankfully accept your offer.

* * * * * *

" In all this I give you *carte blanche,* and only feel happy in having so able as well as so kind an associate.

" Though I have not said half enough, I will not say more, at present at least, than that I am most truly,

" Your obliged friend,

" R. P. Ward.

" I don't know whether you have looked at the pamphlet. If you have, I hope you do

not think the tone of it more trenchant than what the rudeness of the attack deserved."

The pamphlet, entitled "The Reviewer Reviewed," was ultimately published by Mr. Churton, of Holles Street.

What Mr. Ward, in the following letter, smilingly calls my "attempts on his vanity," refer, I suppose, to something I had said while suggesting (at his special request) a subject on which to employ his pen during the happy leisure that he was now enjoying at Okeover Hall. The subject I had proposed to him was his own political "Life and Times." How singularly well qualified he was to treat such a subject, whether with a view to solid information or light amusement, has been since conspicuously shown in the copious extracts from his political diary, which form so important and interesting a feature of Mr. Phipps's book. But there is no denying that the social tact which was so marked a trait of his intellectual character, directed him to the right decision on a question which had evidently engaged much

of his attention since his retirement from public life. He not only, as he says himself, "knew too much and too little" to undertake the task in question, but he knew that, if he did undertake it, he should not be able to divest its performance of that spirit of partisanship which, though he deliberately allowed it to mark his personal career as a politician, he could not permit to interfere with the high and sacred duties of the historian.

I may mention here, that another work which Mr. Ward seriously contemplated about this time was a Life of Bolingbroke,—a true history, which, under his hand, would have been likely to grow into an issue not merely "stranger than fiction," but more romantic and attractive. Probably the same feeling deterred him in this case as in the other.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, Dec. 12, 1838.

* * * * * *

"And now, what shall I say of your

*

attempts upon my vanity? Only that, if you wanted to turn my head or quiz me, you have not succeeded. With a very fair stock of the said commodity (vanity), I am not quite so far gone as to believe I deserve one-hundredth part of what you are pleased to attribute to me. * * * And, therefore, Monsieur Patmore, as I was saying, your panegyrics have downright puzzled me; but no more of that.

"As to the subject you propose, I think you once proposed it before; and, in truth, it is a very tempting one, being full of interest. But, after thinking of it often, I always find myself obliged to give the same answer—I know too much and too little (particularly the last), to undertake it. Besides, if it were not so,

> "'Periculosæ plenum opus alea
> Tractas.'

"After what I have been writing of Burnet, too! No; my life is too tranquil here to risk its continuance, and so 'no more of that, if you love me, Hal.'

"Meantime, I am not altogether idle, and make a great many notes, if no regular work.

"Though so much farther from town, I am really better off for neighbours than at Gilston. I had yesterday a party of fourteen, all thorough ladies and gentlemen, which is more than I could always say of the cockney county I have left. As Johnson (who, by the way, is remembered here) used to say, "we had good talk." In fact, I am fond of real rural thanes, the native *noblesse*, if well educated, which the Boothbys, Davenports, Bromleys, and Fitzherberts, who roost all about me, are.

"There is a mixture, however: some with no blood, but immensely rich; some with high blood, and immensely poor. Among the first, however, Watts Russell bears his faculties so meekly, that he is deservedly popular. He inhabits and possesses the 'happy valley,' which gave Johnson the scene of his 'Rasselas;' and, also, a hollow tree, *in* which, it is said, Congreve wrote 'The Double Dealer.'

"And, now, adieu. I hope you got a basket with certain Christmas commodities, which I ordered to be sent you.

"Ever much yours,

"R. P. W."

XVI.

THE "PICTURES OF THE WORLD."—MR. WARD'S OPINIONS OF HIS OWN WORKS.—HIS CRITICISMS ON HIS CRITICS.—SIR ROBERT PEEL.

THE "Pictures of the World" were now published, and various allusions to them will be found in the letters contained in the present section.

I may here be allowed (*à propos* to some of these allusions) to state, once for all, my firm conviction that the singularly diffident and deprecatory tone and terms in which Mr. Ward was accustomed to respond to those testimonies of admiration which his writings called forth, whether in the form of public criticisms from strangers, or private expressions of personal feeling from friends and acquaintance, were strictly sincere. Not that he ever felt or exhibited any disposition unduly to depreciate the character and tendency of those writings. But he was not seldom stricken with a sort of childlike astonishment at the effect which certain por-

tions of his moral and social delineations of human life produced upon a class of intellect that he had scarcely aimed at reaching; and when the expressions of the feelings thus called forth came to him from friends, who might be supposed to be influenced by personal feelings towards him, he fairly doubted (for a time at least) of their sincerity; and nothing but similar expressions of feeling and opinion from strangers, who were professionally responsible for their decisions, could have quite satisfied him as to the perfect good faith of his friends.

In some of those pleasing and characteristic letters of Mr. Ward to his cultivated friends, Lady Mulgrave, Mrs. Austen, &c., which form so interesting and valuable a portion of Mr. Phipps's book, the views I have just expressed are so fully confirmed, that I am tempted to cite one or two brief passages. The following declaration (in a letter to Lady Mulgrave) in reference to "Tremaine," his first and most successful work, may be accepted as the strictest and most literal truth :—

"The success has been not merely beyond

hope, but all calculation. I had, in fact, no conception of the taste of the town, having merely thrown down my own ideas on paper, chiefly to fill the leisure of my retirement in a manner which I hoped, rather than expected, would be approved."—*Phipps*, ii. 140.

In a subsequent letter to Mrs. Austen, he says:—

"You must no longer accuse me of ungraciousness in my reception of what I was most sincere in thinking I owed to your friendship rather than your justice; though, if just, you know how few opinions I think so valuable as your own. But indeed, indeed, it is no more than true that when I look into myself, and see the nothingness of which I am composed; how totally wanting I am in science, and how neglectful my long life has been of duty, as well as of everything that required energy and self-denial; the truth, that I am a gross imposition, instead of deserving the opinion you tell me such men as Professor Wilson award me, flashes upon me, spite of all the kind manner in which you relate it. However, he is so little of an imposition himself, that I cannot but be greatly

pleased by his wish to know me."—*Phipps*, ii. 216.

The allusion in the opening paragraph of the following letter is to the same subject referred to in the closing letter of the last section—namely, the "very tempting" one of treating of his own "Life and Times." The remainder relates to "Pictures of the World," then just published:—

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Jan. 1, 1839.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—

* * * * * *

"It is not because I was insensible to either the importance or the extreme of your kind and partial judgment of me, which appear in your last letter, that I did not immediately answer it. Yet I could only thank you for it, which I most sincerely do, confessing most unaffectedly my unworthiness of what you are so good as to attribute to me. Though I know *something*, I know so little in comparison of what there is to know, and which others know so much better, that though I might feel much interest in the task you recommend, I am afraid I should

only expose myself. It is, therefore, better to drop all thoughts of the matter, though by no means of the recollection of your kindness about it.

" Where does your kindness end? I discover it in the warm and elegant (would I could say deserved) tribute which I read in the ——. No one else either thinks or could write so of me.

" What else has been written, if anything, I absolutely am ignorant in this closed-up nook; so if you can enlighten me by sending me any papers, pray do. Observe, I mean enlighten either for good or for evil; for, though I don't desire, I can bear to be abused. I am rather surprised that the —— (the only weekly paper I take) has not yet attacked the 'Pictures' or the 'Reviewer Reviewed.'

" Should you have heard anything about it (the latter), and whether it has reached Edinburgh, I should be glad to know, under cover, if you please, to Sir George Anson, at this place. *En attendant.*

" Believe me ever

" Most truly yours,

" R. P. W."

In the following letter the allusions all through are still to "Pictures of the World." Nothing would be more shallow and more unjust than to attribute these allusions, and the almost useless anxiety which some of them imply, to what is called personal vanity, of which few men had so little as Mr. Ward; though he had an unusual amount of that which is apt to be mistaken for it, namely, a strong desire to stand well in the opinion of those whom he esteemed, and a sincere pleasure in being the medium of giving pleasure to others.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Jan. 13, 1839.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—I have just seen the —— ——, and, notwithstanding your denial (if it is one) of the warm and eloquent review of a certain work in it, am persuaded that nobody now alive could have partiality enough to me (to say nothing of the glowing and forcible style), to write such honouring things but yourself.

"There! I have come to the point at once, and deny it if you can.

"Well, much as I have been gratified by it, I don't know that it has made me *much* more your debtor, simply because I was so much so already for a thousand acts of kindness and proofs of good opinion.

"What pleases me most in this review is the handsome and forcible manner in which you vindicate my claim (laughed at by the flippant and very shallow ——) to be something more than a writer of novels of fashionable life. I cannot say I am much flattered to be so considered, and, in short, pretend to be an essayist, only in another form. I am, therefore, the more obliged to you.

"The —— —— disappointed me. Not because I expected approbation, for I looked for the contrary, and was surprised at the favour shown. My surprise was at the want of ability in it as a criticism; at bad grammar in language, and at a strange, nay, gross mistake as to the moral of 'Sterling.' For it says, that, because 'Sterling' fails in achieving what, with his abilities and opportunities, he might have accomplished, Mr. Ward's moral fails too. Why, the very moral is, that, notwithstanding ability and

merit, when they are accompanied with such weaknesses they do and must fail.

"How far more correctly has the —— —— seized this, whoever may be the author. That it is you, however, unless you positively deny it more unambiguously than by saying, that, because you think it is the best of the critiques, it cannot be you, I must continue to opine.

"Pray put the matter frankly out of doubt, and so no more at present from your obliged friend,

"R. P. W."

The passage referring to Sir Robert Peel, in the following letter, suggests a regret that two men whose political careers had begun nearly about the same period,* and had run parallel to each other for several years, should, after a long separation, have missed meeting when the one had reached the highest point of political, and the other of literary, eminence. Had the meeting sought by Sir

* Sir Robert (then Mr.) Peel was Under-Secretary-at-War in the Percival Administration, Mr. Ward having been successively a Lord of the Admiralty and Clerk of the Ordnance in the same.

Robert Peel taken place, we might possibly have had in "De Clifford" (which was at this time in progress) one more of those admirable illustrations of ambition, as exemplified in modern political life, which give such unique and inestimable value to Mr. Ward's writings.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, March 6, 1839.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—I have been ungratefully faulty in not sooner answering your last kind letter (I am afraid even to look at the date), nor will I make things worse by the only cause, not excuse, I can assign for it—too much leisure, and consequent procrastination. In short,

"'I blush and am confounded to appear
Before thy presence, Cato.'

"By the bye, were you ever called Cato before? * * *

"I shall be quite sorry to come to town, though it may give me an opportunity of seeing the few friends I have not survived in the world, you among the best of them. My deafness, however, and the hours I am obliged

to keep, to preserve that delightful freedom from complaint which I am graciously allowed in my old age, unfit me for society, and I am literally forced to shut myself up, happy to have such a retreat in which to do so, and perform my *no* penance.

"I could sometimes wish it otherwise, as I did lately, when Peel asked me for a few days to Drayton, to meet some of our old political friends, which I felt forced to decline on account of my being a bore from my infirmity [his deafness]. I mention it, however, chiefly to add his amusing mode of invitation. He said he was glad to see, as I had quitted politics, that I had betaken myself to literature, adding, 'tam Marti, quam Mercurio,'—'by which,' said he, 'you see, I suppose Mars had a seat at a *military* board, perhaps the Ordnance.'

"Now pray tell me what was the ill-usage or discouragement which, in one of your letters, you said the Tories had given you? Peel's name made me recollect this. All I can say is, that if they disgusted *you*, they were uncommon fools for their pains.

"You talk of reviewers, and well. I have

observed how little they say of Bulwer. That the 'Quarterly' should do so does not surprise me; but, as party is everything, that the 'Edinburgh' should neglect him, does.

"By the way, have you ever happened to hear more of the pamphlet? It got to Edinburgh; for Lord Rosebery (my wife's cousin) wrote word he had been reading it after the review. Do you recollect whether one was sent to Lord Lonsdale? If not, pray order one to him. He wrote me about the essay, and said it had disturbed all his views about the character of the Revolutionists of 1688; and thought I had a great deal of courage not to fear the hornets of the present day. I think, however, I pride myself upon it, and, having just read the essay again, own (though I am not a proper judge) that I value it as a work, and think it may in time be valued by the sober part of the world as much as 'Tremaine.'

"So much for self-deceit. * * *

"*Pour moi*, I *necessarily* read and write a great deal—both chiefly concerning the great subject 'Human Life,' which may possibly produce more fruit.

"I find the 'Pictures' more spoken of, and read much here. My real studies, however, are biblical, in which, with ten thousand differences with the orthodox, I venture to hope I can satisfy myself.

"Adieu. Pray write to me, notwithstanding I don't deserve it. But tell me what you are about, and answer me in respect to your wishes as to ——. Meantime, believe that I am,

"Much yours,

"R. P. W."

XVII.

MR. WARD'S "DE CLIFFORD"—ITS HISTORY, IN LETTERS TO P. G. PATMORE.—WIESBADEN AND ITS SOCIETY.

We now arrive at what must be considered as the most interesting era of Mr. Ward's literary life—that, namely, which included the composition and publication of "De Clifford; or, the Constant Man."

I do not believe the history of modern literature offers any parallel to the case of a writer who, after achieving a reputation second to none of his day, in the highest and most difficult department of the literature of that day (for such, surely, the department must be deemed which claims almost exclusively such names as Scott, Bulwer, Dickens, D'Israeli, and Thackeray), conceives and executes, between the ages of seventy-five and seventy-six years, a work of similar length and character to his previous works, and, at the very least, equal to any one of those in all the various and rare quali-

ties necessary to the creation of such works. For artistic skill in design and construction; for sustained power of execution; for keen insight into, and masterly delineation of, character; for subtle and searching knowledge of the human heart; for extensive acquaintance with existing society in all its grades, and with the influence of its institutions on the manners and moral feeling of the time; for power and precision of intellectual portrait-painting, vigour and justness of thought, healthfulness and warmth of feeling, and loftiness and purity of moral tone; finally, for its general result in a sustained and growing interest from beginning to end, throughout an amount of material greatly exceeding that of any other similar production of the day;*—for each and all of these qualities, "De Clifford" is, at the very least, on a par with either of its two remarkable predecessors, "Tremaine" and "De Vere." And this work was conceived, composed, and produced to the world between the seventy-

* "De Clifford" occupies four thickly printed volumes, and contains an amount of reading equal to considerably more than two ordinary three volume novels.

fifth and seventy-sixth birthdays of its writer —that writer having no stronger personal inducement to such intellectual exertion than the desire for an agreeable occupation of that leisure which, if *not* so occupied, would never for a moment have hung heavy on his hands; for no man was ever blessed by Heaven with a more earnest and sincere love for the pure and simple home-pleasures of a country life, or more favoured by fortune with the means of enjoying them. There have been a few instances of distinguished men *retaining* their faculties in full health and vigour to as late a period of life as that at which Mr. Ward produced "De Clifford;" but in no instance that I am aware of have those faculties been so taxed, or, if taxed, have they yielded a result that can be compared with the one in question.

I will here refer to a passage on this subject which occurs in one of Mr. Ward's subsequent letters. On seeing (before its publication) his touching dedication of "De Clifford" to Lady Frederick Bentinck, I ventured to suggest the policy of his omitting from it any formal mention of his age;

the alleged ground of my suggestion being the ill-natured and offensive use that might possibly be made of it, by those adverse critics whom his former party connexions, and still avowed party feelings, had raised up against him. But he at once and without hesitation refused to adopt my suggestion,—as I *now* think most wisely; for the highest intellectual triumph of his life is unquestionably to be found in the fact I am alluding to.

The first of the following letters contains Mr. Ward's first direct mention of "De Clifford"—under the proposed title of "Bardolfe; or, the Decayed Gentleman"—a title which, at my persuasion, he altered to that which the work at present bears.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Aug. 27, 1840.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—Be so good as to tell me what has become of you, and whether you are still the principal feature of that little closet in which I last saw you, like a little German sovereign of his little domain, on the Elbe, Weser, or Rhine, as the case may be?

"For me, I have not stirred since February, except, now and then, by way of excursion to Matlock, Dovedale, and Johnson's 'happy valley' of Ham—all very beautiful; not to mention Rousseau's cave, at Wooton. With more or less health, I have been leading a life of happiness,—thanks to Him who gave it; and not the less because, at seventy-five, I feel my summons approaches nearer and nearer, every day and every hour.

"However, I did not mean to sermonise when I began, but to tell you that I have at length finished the work I have been so long employed upon—'Bardolfe; or, the Decayed Gentleman,'—at your service.

"By this you will perhaps think, after what I have just said of the summons and seventy-five, that I mean myself. No such thing. The decay is of his family, from being old Norman peers to the lot of a gentleman farmer. On the other hand, after many vicissitudes and adventures, in which there are many pictures of life, he restores it. There is, as usual, a great deal of the didactic, having, in fact, three notable instructors: one an enlightened college

tutor; one a decided *ci-devant* man of the world, but retired from it; the third an active, but philosophic, minister of state, in the midst of it. But the principal feature is what *you* have had no small share in producing. It is a decided love tale; nay more—is carried through three whole volumes, with a beginning, a middle, and an end; with two heroines: a sort of (I am afraid inferior) Georgina, and a decidedly superior woman of fashion, but of greater sense and goodness, whom I am myself in love with.

"Well, what do you think of it?

* * * * * *

"Perhaps, after all these elucidatory particulars, you may not be in town. In truth, though to my loss, I hope you are not; for your health (precious to more than your mere self) will suffer from your too intense exertions. This I have long thought, and I do hope you have corrected that most suicidal custom of sitting up all night. I shall be therefore glad if you have fled from Marylebone, and if to your lady-love, Mrs. G—, at Paris, so much the better, whatever

Mrs. Patmore may think. Adieu, good friend.

"Ever much yours,

"R. P. W.

"P.S.—The season for fresh legs of pork and turkeys is not yet come. When it does, some of them shall call at your door. I have three fine hogs, five cows, fifty-two turkeys, forty ducks, a hundred chickens, ten guinea fowls, and my wife handsomer and kinder than ever. *Beatus ille qui procul!*"

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Sept. 27, 1840.

"DEAR PATMORE, — Welcome back to England, for back you are come, if there is faith in the greatest of publishers, though a little man. But if you liked Wiesbaden as well as I did, you will soon wish yourself back again. Could I have got that pretty house on the hill called the Palais, which the duchess, I am told, has bought, I believe I should be there still. The owner asked 2400 florins a-year for it, only a fourth part

furnished, and I agreed to give it. He then refused to do anything but sell it, and demanded 35,000 florins, which was beyond me, — luckily for him, for he has got 50,000 from her Royal Highness. Pray did you see her?

"I wish I was in town to have a gossip with you about this pretty town and patriarchal government. I suppose you walked, as I did, to Sonenberg every day. But if I go on about Wiesbaden I shall have no room for Mr. De Clifford, who leaves this for London next Tuesday, and whom I beg to introduce to your best civilities in Colburn's name and mine.

"I am quite glad to have agreed with that modern Lintot, for I should have been sorry to have gone to anybody else. In truth, I think him friendly, fair, and straightforward. He gives me —— for 1250 copies, and —— more for a second edition.

"You see I have taken your advice about Bardolfe, as to which name I had as many scruples as you, and for the same reason, the hell-fire nose, and the flea frying on it, the only thing which ever put Falstaff in mind

of a soul in torment. Having, however, alluded much to a Bardolfe castle and estate in the work, as well as to the family as the ancestors of the hero, I did not like altogether to part with the descent, and luckily discovering that Sir W. Clifford married the coheiress of the Earl Bardolfe (temp. Rich. II.), I availed myself of that finer name, to which Colburn clapped on a De, and so here we are.

"What you will say to it I know not. Judging from your too kind partiality displayed in your letter, I ought not to be afraid, and there are things in it which I am myself much pleased with (the whole work no doubt, you will say); but I can be no judge.

"I have submitted my refined lady to another lady of quality, Lady ——, who has been passing a fortnight with us, and she has set her seal to it, particularly an interesting discussion upon the real nature of fashion and vulgarity, introduced by way of instructing the hero, while in his novitiate, on that difficult and puzzling question.

"There are some situations which I am not without the hope will interest you. The didactics, however, are most interesting to myself, though I shall be very glad if you do not think them too long.

"I am willing to hope, on the other hand, that the story is rather original, certainly not common place.

"There is one part for which I will beg your particular attention. It is a dissertation (far from compromising) upon the jobbing of the modern system of reviewing—what I call the criticism of the shop. Pray do you know anything of a Mr. Reid, who attacked it boldly and cleverly in a short tract, called 'Reviewers Reviewed'?

"I fear to bore you, or rather rob you of your valuable time, or I could say many things; but this I feel to be more than *quantum suff.* I will only therefore revert a little to your letter, which was very agreeable both to Mrs. P. W. and me, particularly for liking Wiesbaden so well. We wondered, by the way, whether you ever met with some friends we were very fond of—Comtesse Mathilde Dumontz, dame d'honneur to Princess

Frederica of Prussia, and Comtesse de Grüen, her sister. There was also a family of the Baronne de Marechale, at the head of everything there, and very charming. But the most charming of all was the duchess herself, not the less so for reading and speaking English—having read 'Tremaine' and 'De Vere,' and, with the duke, having sent me a pretty message for what I said of them and their subjects in 'Human Life.'

"I am afraid you will think, if you don't say, what a coxcomb! Yet it is not surely *mere* vanity that makes me take pleasure in having pleased persons I so very much liked and respected.

"Well,—*pour revenir à nos moutons*,—though now an old stager, I shall be *tremblingly alive* to what you will say of me; so have mercy upon my youthful sensibility!

"I will only add my hope that your pleasant excursion has had the effect which all your friends must wish upon your health, which must be valuable to them and your family, whatever it may be to yourself. For I must again scold you for your way of life, which you seem to consider, as Mr.

Macnamara did a disease he had contracted. 'How do you trate it?' said a friend. 'Trate it?' said he. 'With the utmost contempt.'

"Pray copy me, who think the world still worth living for, and who, not very far from seventy-six, feel freer from illness than ever I did in my life; and so no more at present from your loving friend,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Oct. 7, 1840.

"DEAR PATMORE,—

* * * * * *

"I am particularly desirous of your thoughts on the parts [of De Clifford] to which that name [Sourkrout] as you will see, belongs. I really had no particular person in view, as to him, or Paragraph, or Spleenwort; but put them generally for the tribe of self-sufficient, malignant critics, wherever found.

"But I forget all this is in the third volume. *Au reste*, I hope Bertha, and Lady Hungerford will please you, and Fothergill, and

Manners, which last I own particularly pleases myself, though, being the channel of the Ethics and Didactics, I doubt the world. I will only add, that to Lady ——, a perfect Lady Hungerford as to mind, and as to experience of the highest *monde*, (being herself one of it)—I submitted all the chapters on Fashion, Vulgarity, &c., during a long visit she has been paying us, and she gave me an unqualified imprimatur.

"There! I have unburthened myself, and, as I know how valuable your time is, I will just sign my name and farewell.

"R. P. Ward."

R. Plumer Ward to P. G. Patmore.

"Okeover Hall, Ashbourn, Oct. 20, 1840.

"Dear Patmore,—

* * * * * *

"Well, and so you have received all my packets safe, viands and all. As you like the latter so well, I think they ought to be repeated.

* * * * * *

"But now to the more refined, viz., the critical parts of your letter. Be assured, in goading you as I did, I did not expect or

imagine you could give any opinion of the work, far less a notice of such good augury as you are pleased to send. My anxiety was, lest there should have been a miscarriage of any of the packets, which would have been irreparable. As it is, I own you have comforted me greatly with your impressions of the first one hundred and fifty pages, the extent of your reading, for it is about there that I have been most anxious, fearing particularly that the school delineations might be thought uninteresting and childish. But if you think of these as you seem to do, I am not so much afraid of your opinion of the rest, which I trust you will find less didactic, particularly when Mr. De Clifford gets away from his master, Fothergill.

"And now I will wait upon my oars till to-day's post arrives, glad if I do not receive a scold from you in return for mine. It may, however, diversify a lonely day; for my wife, whose society, when she leaves me, I more and more miss, is gone with her father, Sir George, to leave all our duties with the Queen Dowager—a piece of etiquette which we find all our neighbouring families have pursued.

"Thank heaven, I myself have done with etiquette, and have reached that happy time when I have a legitimate right (which *you* have only usurped), to sit all the morning, and even pace my garden, *en robe de chambre*. In short (except that I am far happier in a wife, with whom I am absolutely every hour more and more in love, in even the *admiring* sense of the word), there is a certain Mr. Manners in the MS. between whom and myself I request and desire you will discover a considerable affinity. This I tell you for your comfort, against the time when you will be near seventy-six. It is really certain, that much as I expended myself in my youth, I am, I believe I may say, happier than ever I was in my life; and as this place, though it may not be the cause, is certainly the scene of my happiness, you must not be surprised if your anticipations as to Mr. De Clifford are not realised, and that the winter will probably not see me among you.

"Though not so splendid, I love this abode, particularly the exterior, and I also love my society better than in Hertfordshire. I have not so fine a park, but I have Dove-

dale; I have not a house that covers an acre of ground, but neither does it cost me above 300*l.* a-year to keep it warm.

"On the other hand, I am here not one of a band of cockneys, whose hearts are all day in the city, though their bodies affect groves and fields—sprung up, too, like mushrooms; but for a time at least, feel the representative (though 'jure uxoris et vitrici') of a family of nine hundred years, flourishing and fructifying all that time on the same spot.

"Prejudice and illusion, you will say, and say truly; to which I reply, how much happier in a thousand instances than reality! In short, ever since I could read, I felt that I would rather be Sir Roger de Coverley than Cæsar; and here, at least, I am more like him than at Gilston.

* * * * * *

"Adieu. The post is come in, and no letter from you. So thanking you again for yours of yesterday, I am,

"Dear Patmore,

"Yours, very truly,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD to P. G. PATMORE.

" Okeover Hall, Nov. 27, 1840.

"DEAR PATMORE,—I cannot let your letter, so kind and so gratifying, remain another day unanswered, especially as it relieved my anxiety lest you should think the interest in the first volume of 'De Clifford' in danger.

" I wish I could as fully relieve myself from another anxiety, almost as great, to know how far, that is, what proportion, I deserve of the honouring (I might almost say), the pathetic things you say of my lucubrations. Gladly would I compound for a sixth, nay, a tenth part of them, which would have satisfied even my earlier vanities. What must they be now, when vanity itself is fast wearing out with the rest of my frailties, like rats abandoning a falling old body? How I have deserved the partiality you so eloquently indulge, unaffectedly I cannot tell. Yet I cannot believe but that you are an honest man, and too proud to flatter, even were I anything more than a worn-out old Tory, totally without power, and whose interests are almost reduced to the flock of hens and turkeys he beholds from his windows.

" Well, I at least feel sure of your sin-

cerity, though the test of it is to me a strange, and would be a doubtful one, if it did not come from you, that I leave an impression with you like that of Wordsworth. By the way, were you not thinking of Laoda-*mia* when you inadvertently wrote Laod-*iceâ*—

'Mittit et optat amans quo mittitur ire, salutem,
Æmonis, Æmonio, Laodamia viro;'

in short, the wife of Protesilaus?

* * * * * *

"I wish I could administer better than I do to the delicate appetite of the lady wife. My step-son's trustees are rather stingy as to the manors here, confining their supply to my own actual table. I cannot blame them, however, as it is to *restore* the game, which has been during the minority much wasted. I shall be glad, however, to do my possible.

"For the present I will only repeat my thanks, and remain your much obliged

"R. P. W."

The passage in the following letter, alluding to his exploits in the long gallery of Okeover Hall, is very characteristic, and will have a peculiar interest for those who remember the

almost stately courtliness of his manner and bearing on some occasions. The passage reminds one of the great statesman who was caught on all-fours, playing at horses with his little boy. But *he* could appeal to the parental feelings of his visitor, and go on with his game; whereas the innocent and healthful sport of the Master of Okeover must have been enjoyed literally at the cost he speaks of.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Dec. 16, 1840.

"DEAR PATMORE,—I write chiefly to say I send you, per coach, a cargo of Christmas merry-makings, which, for the honour of the seat of the Okeovers, I hope will prove good. Imprimis, a haunch of venison, doe, but delicate; item, a hare, killed yesterday; a turkey, ditto the day before; a chine, just out of salt. I wish I could add a barrel of excellent stingo, which makes the rustics smack their lips at it whenever they come into its neighbourhood. Still more, I wish I could send you our coal-pit, which makes such blazers as never were seen in London.

But who would live in London? Where there can I get a gallery eighty feet long to run about in, which I do for an hour together, singing and dancing without scruple, now that the servants begin really to believe that I am not mad. It would do you a great deal of good if you were to do so too. * *

"It is dangerous to ask a critic's opinion, even though a friendly one; but I do hope you like Lady Hungerford.

"Adieu. Ever yours,

"R. P. W.

"P.S.—I am quite glad that I did not send off the inclosed before to-day's letters came in, as it gives me an opportunity of adding my thanks (how due!) for all the kind and certainly gratifying things you say about points and persons, as to which I had some little anxiety. That you should speak of Manners and Lady Hungerford as you do is, I assure you, not only most pleasant but most encouraging, where, from my own doubts of the execution, I wanted encouragement. Lady A—— (an excellent judge, being herself one of the most sensible and best bred women in England, and of great

experience as to others) allayed much of my fear, but you have converted it into confidence; and I own I grow so fond of Manners myself, that, setting all author feelings aside, I am fonder of you for seeming fond of him.

"In short, your letter has made me feel six inches taller than I was in the morning.

"I am also sincerely grateful to you for all you so warmly and delicately express on the progress of our intimacy, though I am distressed not a little at being the author of the passage which gave rise to it."

XVIII.

"DE CLIFFORD."—ITS PUBLICATION.—STROKE OF GENIUS.—"CHATSWORTH" ATTRIBUTED TO MR. WARD.

In continuing to furnish details from Mr. Ward's own pen of the passage through the press of his last and most remarkable work, "De Clifford," I shall need no apology with those readers who appreciate, or desire to appreciate, the literary and intellectual character of its writer. And it is to such readers only that these Memorials are addressed.

It will be clear from several passages in some of the following, as well as the preceding letters, that their writer felt for a time infinitely more anxiety and uncertainty about the fate of this latest of his literary offspring—this beloved child of his old age—than he had done in regard to any of its predecessors, and that a previous success, as signal and uniform as it was unexpected, had anything but increased his confidence in his own powers. This unaffected diffidence, coupled with the uncon-

cealed and almost childlike gratification which he felt in the commendations of those friends in whose judgment he put faith, offers a rare and beautiful instance of that freshness and youthfulness of heart and spirit which marked the last years of Mr. Ward's lengthened life, as notably as they had done the earlier ones.

The passage I have retained in the first of the following letters tempts me to remark, that if there is one test of what is called "genius" more sure than another, it is the occasional production of effects of which the producer is at first unconscious. The productions of the greatest genius that ever lived are one great series of these effects; and in his case the unconsciousness seems to have existed not merely "at first," but at last, and to the end; for none can believe (at least, from what we at present know of him) that Shakspeare felt and recognised his vast powers or their results; and as certain is it that none of his friends, rich as some of them were in similar gifts, seem to have ever told him of them, at least, to anything like the extent to which we of the present age insist on. The whole of Mr. Ward's works

contain nothing else so subtilely felt, so delicately and clearly developed, and so beautifully true at once to the decrees of nature and the requirements of art, as the unconscious love of Bertha for De Clifford throughout the entire story—a love that, while it never suffers one defalcation from its allegiance, never permits one discovery of its power till that supreme moment when all the world are welcome to know it. And of this finest feature in this the most consummate of all his various delineations of the female character, he himself, as appears from what follows, was wholly unconscious!

"My discovery," as he phrases it, of this "double constancy" was of course nothing more than some passing expression of my admiration for the feature in question, as finely enhancing the noble *unity* of design displayed in this story—taking it for granted that he so intended it.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, Jan. 17, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,— * * * I am particularly delighted with the discovery you

have made (which I own I never made myself) of the *double constancy* in the work, that of Bertha as well of De Clifford. It gives a very increased value to the story, though, as I say, it was not a part of my professed object. In this you make me feel like the Irishman, who, prosecuting another for an assault, was so impressed with the eloquence of his counsel (Curran) in describing it, that he advanced into the middle of the court and addressed the jury: 'Indade, now, it's all true, every word of it; but I did not know I had been half so ill-used till this jintleman tould me.' I, of course, meant to represent De C. as always in high favour with Bertha, without, perhaps, her knowing how much; but confess it was not my object to demonstrate *her* constancy as well as his.

"You please me much by what you say of the quarrel with Albany. I myself felt very heroic in writing it. * * *

"R. P. W.

"P.S.—What is the 'Betrothed,' advertised by Bentley? Was not that the title of the novel you praised so much, and which I have been looking for ever since? But that was

to be published by Colburn. What is the mystery of its postponement? C. told me it has long been printed, though not brought out."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, March 4, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—I do not think you have a right to tantalize me by saying you have a 'bright thought,' which is evidently to do you good, and then stop without telling it. You must feel that such a thought, leading to such consequences, must be most interesting to me, and I shall really be most anxious to be told it, when properly concocted. At any rate, I am glad you are going to do something with those 'Tales of the Olden Time.' I liked them so well, as indeed everything I have seen of yours (particularly your play), that I am absolutely astonished at your consuming your own bright fires in clearing others of smoke and dirt. What is to hinder you, with far less waste of time (and far pleasanter employment too), from reaping as much of the harvest of letters as those rapid and suc-

cessful gentlemen, Marryat, to wit, and Ainsworth, and James, and even Sir Edward himself?

"By the way, I have just finished the last work of the last-mentioned, and was more, far more interested by it than by any of his other works. I could not quit it, notwithstanding it was, as usual, filled with improbabilities. But Robert Beaufort, Lord Lilburn, Mr. Beaufort, the Mortons, Madame Mirevale, and some others, make up for wants in the still more principal (or intended principal) characters, the hero, Philip, and the strange and overpowering anomaly, Gawtry. They are admirably touched, the interest never ceases from beginning to end, and prevents you from stopping to mark faults. No mean service. What do you say to it? * *

"The plot thickens, and we may soon be out.*

"Notwithstanding the stones I have thrown at the Sourkrouts and Paragraphs, who will no doubt pelt me in return, my

* Alluding to "De Clifford."

pulse is very tranquil; and, whether from impenetrable assurance or noble confidence, I have very good hopes for my 'Constant Man.' Certainly, I never felt less anxiety from fear of critics, whom, with very few exceptions indeed, I have begun to despise.

"Adieu. Always much yours,

"R. P. W."

The "bright thought" referred to in the following and preceding letters was shortly afterwards put into words, in the form of a request that Mr. Ward would give the sanction of his name, as editor, to those "Tales of the Olden Time," of which he had expressed so favourable an opinion in former letters, and had repeatedly urged me to publish; the favour being, of course, sought conditionally on his approval of every part of the work when completed for publication; and only under the belief that nothing short of such sanction would attract attention to a series of Tales, the scenes of which are for the most part laid in ante-historical times. In making this request to Mr. Ward, it is due to myself to say, that it never for an instant occurred to

me that his compliance with it would subject him even to the suspicion, much less to the distinct and formal attribution, of the authorship of a work so totally different in style, tone of thought, mode of construction, &c., from anything that he had put forth. Yet the attribution was almost universally made —was reiterated after his formal denial of it—and has been repeated in *every* Memoir that I have seen of Mr. Ward (of course excepting Mr. Phipps's) since his death. It is for this reason that I have thought it necessary hereafter to refer, somewhat in detail, to the facts of the case, and to publish two or three of his letters on the subject.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, March 6, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—You tantalize worse than ever, and make me quite angry by the disappointing structure of your sentence, informing me that you had overcome your scruple about communicating your 'bright thought,' which you would unfold—in a *day or two*. 'O, most lame, and impotent conclusion!' And all the worse for my knowing what with

you a day or two means—scarcely less than three or four weeks.

"Well! you make up for it (if anything can) by the very pretty things you say of my dear heroines, and the encouragement this gives me as to their final success. Nor can anything be more delicate than the manner in which you convey a good opinion which, I need not tell you, is the most valuable I could have. So I gird myself for the battle, and care nothing for the Sourkrouts.

"Farewell, and ever yours,

"R. P. W."

XIX.

MR. WARD'S REMARKS ON "CONINGSBY; OR, THE ENGAGEMENT."

As "Coningsby; or, the Engagement," the work referred to in the two following letters, cannot have been forgotten by those who read it, Mr. Ward's admirable criticisms on it would be worth preserving, even if they were of less general application than they for the most part are, to all works of the same class :—

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, March 8, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—

* * * * * *

"C. has sent me 'The Engagement,' which *engaged* me too much yesterday, being but a heathenish employment for Sunday. Two hundred and fifty pages ought not to warrant an opinion; but I own the first two hundred gave me no notion of a perform-

ance which could so please you; and for an accomplished man of the world to be actually in love with, so as to wish to marry, from mere recollection, a child of six years old, seemed a marvellous illustration of the 'incredulus odi.'

"Then I missed originality; and though Horatia promised to be charming, I felt a want of striking character in the persons introduced.

"Then I was astonished with certain strange phrases, such as the '*folds* of one's thoughts,' 'a long line's nobility,' and 'a rich one's affluence.' The very first sentence startled me, when I found that, on a door softly opening, a young and graceful form, instead of entering, *tenanted* a room. I feared the announcement of affectation of style, which, with me, kills the best performance in other respects.

"Shall I own, too (I am willing to believe it my own fault), that I find the phraseology often obscure, and that I cannot easily tell what the author is at in his characters. I do not yet understand why Lady Mornington, with all her loftiness, should, when her

beloved husband is brought home a corpse, *feel all, but ask* nothing. I do not make out De Grey, though intended to be a most principal personage; as little, Mr. Dudley, though I see he is to be one; and young Master Lovel, not at all.

"You will say that it is quite unfair to judge by two hundred and fifty pages, and I quite agree, on the question of *general* merits; but still I think the mere harbingers of a story, and particularly if they are to become the actors of it, ought to be introduced with some impression. Here, also, they are commended to us principally by what the author says of them, not what they say themselves. Witness Miss Belleisle; always confining myself to my first two hundred and fifty pages, which, however, is a very great proportion of the first volume.

"You will laugh at me if I add my discontent even at the uncouth title of the hero. Where the deuce was there ever an Earl of Haslingham, much less one whose dreams were haunted by a child six years old? I own, however, and am glad to do so, that his character begins to open a considerable

promise of interest, and the narrative of his feelings and conduct towards Coningsby makes us expect something to compensate for preceding platitudes. These also are much relieved by Mrs. Percival's amusing romance, so well described as to be (to me) the best part of the book I have yet met with, considered as a work of attraction.

"Now, before you propose to cut my throat for all this, 'consider,' as Tinsel says, 'I am but a coxcomb,' and, like a coxcomb, am hazarding a plunge without having learned to swim. I certainly confess myself rash, and even unjust, by venturing to say so much, with so very little knowledge of what is to come. I shall, therefore, have the greatest pleasure hereafter in making an ample *amende;* particularly if Haslingham (still confound the name!) realises the expectation founded upon the peculiarities of his character and qualities, which have begun to be opened.

"If you are very angry, luckily for me you will perhaps be too busy to vent it, and this, perhaps, is what has made me so bold. With this consolation, believe me yours, *à l'ordinaire,* R. P. W.

"By the way, is any similarity intended between Haslingham and Tremaine, or Horatia and Georgina?"

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, March 13, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—I thought I should set fire to a train. Pray heaven I do not get burnt by it. In truth, I was imprudent—perhaps unjust. Imprudent, because possibly you may make me pay for it when my turn comes with De C.; unjust, because it was not fair to hazard what I did, after only two hundred and fifty pages, before I could have fully possessed the mere *carte du pays*.

"You must have thought me prejudiced when I even quarrelled with the title of the hero. It was, I own, a very minor objection, yet 'tis one; though certainly not enough to be even cavilled at, where merit greatly preponderates, as I own it does here. So no more of that.

"In truth, if an intense interest, after it begins, continuing to the very end, can make a work meritorious, this is one of great merit, and exhibits, with some (to me cruel) faults,

from exuberance in style, the talents and power of a man of genius. Such I said to myself when I closed the book, and scored it all over with notes both of praise and blame; praise in nearly every one of the points which you have yourself commended, and in which I am free to say I agree with *you;* blame for some in which you probably will not agree with *me.*

"To begin, I think its first and chief merit as to execution is what you yourself have so warmly lauded, in what you say is 'its masterly delineation of character, and the unsurpassed knowledge and appreciation of the results of an artificial state of society on the head as well as the heart.'

"To every word of this I fully assent. I never read anything in which the subordinate characters were so true to themselves, and were made so important. Mrs. Percival, I allowed before, seemed perfect, and she maintains her place to the last; but Lady Maldon seems even to exceed her, and exhibits still more skill, because quieter and less prominent, and therefore requiring more tact and subtlety of observation to draw her out. The amusement afforded from the impossibility of her

being amused is indescribable; and even the inferior oddities of Mansfield are in such keeping, that he alone would make us thank the author.

"Your hero is, I see, De Grey; nor am I surprised at it: and if he is not mine, that is, if I think him a less perfect exhibition than those I have mentioned, it is because he is too eccentric to be natural. His wit, talent, eagerness, and resources, conjoined with his warmth and honesty of heart, ought and do more than outweigh the effect of what you properly call 'his brilliant extravagance.' But still this extravagance is too great—at least for *me*. I am bewildered; and after admiring, and laughing, and loving, I feel that he is not to be found amongst our kind, and I sigh for something more natural.

"You mention his namesake Vivian, and I agree with you as to his superiority in the powerful delineation given of him; but I cannot give a thoroughly satisfactory vote to either; both are nondescript in the scale of being, and, I repeat, *incredulus odi*.

"His story, however, leads to another character in the work, which, little as there is of her (only one short scene), is to me

the perfection of interest in the whole; for as far as raising perfect love and approbation, so as to be in love with her one's self, is interest, mine is absorbed by Lady Julia. Compared with her bearing when told of the rupture of her brother's engagement, the dignified emotions of Eleanor, and even the agonies of the suffering but weak Horatia, are *fade* and flat. To tell you the truth, she is the only one in the book who really impressed me with tenderness, called up all my approving feeling, and made me wish 'that heaven had made me such a one.'

* * * *

"Well, have I said enough by way of *amende?* No; for you want me to admire the *honourable* Coningsby. I should think more of his honour if, quite sensible of the wrong he was doing, he was not so fond of kissing the betrothed of his relation; and I should esteem and feel for that betrothed more if she was not quite so patient in being kissed. Werter kisses Charlotte when a wife; but not only it is not suffered by Charlotte, but it is a leave-taking by Werter, who is going out of the world.

"I own the weakness of this heroine derogates from what was intended to be an attractive character; and I am also disappointed in the hero. He never was meant to be very amiable, but he was meant to be very high; and he is so for a long time, so that the chief and, I own, a swelling interest attaches to his conduct on his return home, to find himself, as he will think it, *dishonoured*. We suppose the world will not be able to hide the delinquents from his vengeance—that he will kill them with a frown. Our opinion, too, of his doating love, and his unfailing constancy in his attachment, is so raised by what I almost think the most beautiful part of the book (certainly the best testimony of the power of describing affection in the writer), that we commiserate and love him for it with unexpected sympathy.

"Indeed, from its effect upon Horatia, I was in hopes, as I read, of a very different termination—something like the charming change in the delightful Caroline de Lichfield, when she discovered the real character of her husband. Alas! no. The fondness, the real tenderness, and, still more, the manly self-

blame and apologies of a person who sacrifices all his haughtiness to intense affection, and lays his pride at her feet, has no effect upon the betrothed, who has downright jilted him; and she sighs and weeps on, not from remorse, but from fear of *him*, and regret that she is to lose her other lover.

"Then, again, as to himself. With such exquisite fondness and admiration—such a deep sense of wounded honour—such dreadful mortifications, both to his love and self-estimation—that we are to suppose, after immolating both victims to his vengeance, he would almost fly man, and still more womankind—what are we to say when, in one little fortnight, in the midst of a breathless thirst for retribution, a five minutes' information that an old mistress loves him, makes him forget all his injuries, recover from all his wounds, and feel as light-hearted and happy a lover, and also as stainless a cavalier, as if he was fresh and untouched both in his affections and his honour?*

* What we are to say is, that he has all along loved the "old mistress," but has concealed the fact from himself, under the belief that *she* had never loved *him*.

"I own these things do not please me, and show that the author has, at least, not attended to one of the best rules of Horace, 'Qualis ab incepto,' &c.

"After this, it will be useless to descend to minor things, otherwise I would touch upon the total uselessness of the introduction of such a character as Dudley. He seems intended at first for something; but whatever it was, it is soon forgotten, and he shrinks into mute insignificance.

"Yet, with all this, I again say that this is no common book, and the author no common man. Perhaps he is a very young one. If so, I think the reading public will be very much obliged to him when his fancy is a little more disciplined. If you know him, I shall be glad and proud to know him too, through your good offices.

"As to another important point, I am really afraid to touch upon a style which is so outrageously florid, and so exuberantly full of strange as well as mixed metaphors, as unhappily often to disappoint the best-raised expectations of real and touching eloquence. Upon this I will not, however, enlarge,

hoping that it is only the effect of a young and warm imagination.

"There are, however, some faults in syntax (probably from mere inadvertence), which ought to be corrected. He more than twice writes 'It was him' for it was he; and in page 313, vol. iii., in a sentence of sixteen lines of print, no less than nine participles present are all languishing for a substantive or pronoun, to carry them to a verb which should do something by way of action. Yet neither substantive, pronoun, or verb is to be found, and the participles are all left—*jealous, knowing, drawing back, teaching, losing, looking, stooping, gathering,* &c., with no one consequence attending them.

"Pray don't think me pedantic in all this. Your own style is so clear, chaste, and grammatical, that you cannot quarrel with these notices, especially as they are mentioned only with a view to enable a man of evident talents to prevent himself from forfeiting the full benefit of them from mere carelessness.

"There! You have my honest opinion, *pour et contre,* in which *pour* greatly predominates. Would we could say so of all

books! But, pray heaven, I have not roused a lion by it.

"Heartily yours,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, March 21, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,— * * * I am fortunate, as well as honoured, in having escaped, upon the whole, so comfortably from the effects of an indignation which I felt pretty sure I had provoked.

"After all, I do not think the difference between us so very wide; for I yield to your favourite all the attributes you wish as to genius, and the power of seizing at least the ridicule of character, which he does, I think, quite as well, if not a great deal better, than perhaps *all* modern authors.

"But to the charge that my criticism is not conceived in a kindly spirit, I plead not guilty. Why should it be an unkindly one because I cannot admire either the hero or heroine, though I feel the wrongs of the gentleman as much as you would have me, and think the scene between him and

his guilty mistress full of real pathos, and more impressive than most I ever read, certainly the most so of any in the book?

"I shall be truly glad to hear of its success, though where to look for an account of it I don't well know, seeing so little of the press in this retirement. I had hoped for it in the 'Spectator' to-day, but was disappointed.

"I am exceedingly amused with your account of the gossip in Mrs. ——'s boudoir. I have fancied her to myself a sort of Lady Hungerford. Is she so? I trust you pay proper court to her, *en vrai* De Clifford. If she is like the print of her in a former 'New Monthly,' she must be worth it, exclusive of her talents. * * *

"With this I must say farewell, for my letter is called for.

"Yours *à l'ordinaire*,

"R. P. W."

XX.

MR. WARD'S OPINION OF "CECIL."—HIS ANXIETIES ABOUT "DE CLIFFORD."—THE ONLY CHARACTERS FROM REAL LIFE IN THAT WORK.

THE following letters will speak for themselves. They were written immediately after the publication of "De Clifford; or, the Constant Man."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, March 30, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—I cannot help writing to say that I have finished 'Cecil,' and am greatly amused with its ineffable wit and impertinence. I feel your criticism in every line of it—'flashy, and crammed too full of cleverness to be good for much, except to kill time.' As I suppose Lord Howden* meant no more, it would not be fair to criticise it.

"As to its moral, it is entirely of the Bulwer school, savouring much of Pelham,

* For some weeks after the publication of "Cecil," its authorship (since avowed by Mrs. Gore) was attributed to Lord Howden.

and the new plan of holding up one's fathers and mothers to ridicule. Nevertheless, the epigrammatic turns and descriptions make it very pleasant; and the pathetic parts (though Emily Barnet is a failure) give promise of much power. As a proof of it, the gipsy gave me a sad nightmare. * * *

"By a puff in the 'Observer' I see the Baron de Clifford is out.

"Should you see any review, good, bad, or indifferent, in any other papers, morning, evening, weekly, or monthly, I will beg you to send them, and I will reimburse expenses directly. I suppose there can hardly be one in the 'New Monthly.' If there is, will you send it?

"I would gladly spare you this trouble, but I know not how to describe what I want to a common newsman, who can obey a matter of fact, but hardly a discretionary order, which a conditional one would be.

"If you have any more boudoir gossip, I shall be glad of it, being so much out of the world; but I own it is not fair to ask it, absorbed as you are. A reason why I should say adieu. R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, April 9, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—

* * * * * *

"Very few things could give me more pleasure than what you communicated in your last; and I trust it will, for the present at least, quiet your not unnatural anxieties. I cannot at all flatter myself that anything I was able to say to —— influenced his change of decision; but from very sincere regard for your interest, and very unceasing wonder, as well as regret, to think you in a position so totally unworthy your attainments and deserts, I should be glad to think I could have been of the smallest service; which, however, I do not.

"I would have answered your letter much sooner, but have been, I trust not dangerously, but uncomfortably ill, so as to be particularly disabled from writing, the attack having been of bilious giddiness. I quite enter into the propriety of your resolution, as soon as possible to set yourself free from the uncertainties of a situation so totally

unworthy of you. I, therefore, am glad to think you persist in the contemplation of using your own resources as an *author*, as well as, or in addition to, those to which you condescend, for so I must call it.

* * * * * *

"As to my bantling, I am an utter blank concerning it, having heard no one word about it, good or bad; except, indeed, from my sister-in-law, Lady Mulgrave, who, upon the information of about half the first volume, compliments me upon what she calls a *freshness* equal to 'Tremaine.' Well, if the world will think so too, no bad account. Next week, I suppose, will bring something.

* * * * * *

"Enough this, for a still giddy man; so I will no more than that I am as usual,

"Much yours,

"R. P. W.

"I could not make out the name you gave to your supposed author of 'Cecil.' Pray repeat it. I have looked in vain for any other review than *yours* of the 'Engagement.' Extraordinary!"

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, April 12, 1841.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—Very many thanks for your kind communication. In my total dearth of intelligence respecting my bantling, it was worth a good deal; and the —— is really very flattering I am quite surprised at the non-appearance of the work till last Wednesday. *My* copies certainly came before. I suppose there will be a notice in the next ——, and I hope it will be by a certain friend of mine. I will spare you the trouble as to the —— next week, by ordering it of my newsman.

"Pray can you tell me the writer of the little scrap in the —— ——, whose play upon 'Time' you made me notice.

"You did not tell me the name I could not make out as the author of 'Cecil.' Sir George Anson says it is reported to be a Mr. Fairchild; probably thicker skinned than he of 'De Clifford.' I saw the notice of the 'Engagement' in the ——, but, except the extract from your own ample review of it, it was I thought, rather meagre.

You said you had two reviews of De C. to accomplish. Is the other for the next 'New Monthly?'

"I shall look out for your promised letter in answer to mine on your own subject, and only repeating, that there is no man's well-doing in which I take a greater interest,

"I remain, dear Patmore,

"Much and truly yours,

"R. P. WARD.

"Since writing the above, I am much amused with a paragraph in the 'Globe,' Sir George Anson's paper, which he has just brought me, fixing many of the characters in 'De Clifford' as portraits of originals, particularly Lord Rochfort, whom, it says, every lady will recognise. It is, at least, more than I can do myself, any more than Albany, and others mentioned. If this goes on, I shall have a fine kettle of fish, as Western says.

"Would you have me disclaim all this? or do you think it a refined puff oblique of the shop? The paragraph desires a key from the publisher; you know there is no such key. The only real bonâ fide sketch I know

of is my dearest and earliest friend, whose picture Manners descants upon at the Grange, under the initials of Sir M. S. S. This was certainly Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, father of the late baronet, and this I should not be sorry for the world to know, if they thought it worth while. There are also resemblances here and there to Lord Mulgrave, my most revered connexion and friend, in Lord Castleton; but these are confined to his high sense of honour, disinterested plainness, and love of letters. All the other portraits are, as you know, of a class, not individuals."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Sunday, April 18, 1841.

"Well, I have to thank you for a great deal of good-natured zeal for my author feelings (I will not, after being so hackneyed in them, call them anxieties), in sending me the ——, the, ——, and the——.

"In the last, I doubt, there was much more than the mere transmission; for, besides that I know it is one of your papers, I am well persuaded that no one but yourself is, or can be, so kind as to write of me in a

manner so forcibly and brilliantly eloquent as that paper has done. It had all its due effect upon a large party here, and somewhat, no doubt, upon myself. For, allowing all I could for our friendship, and knowing your *fierté* as to the independence of your opinions, I could not but *believe*, as well as hope, that there must be *some* merit in what had called forth such an eulogy; and so, Master P. G. Patmore, I acknowledge that you have given me very great pleasure by what you have said, even if only a quarter of it were really deserved, and three quarters set down to the account of friendship.

"I begin to receive other notices besides those in the papers. I mean in private reports, which are very comfortable; but I can hardly hope that, sixteen years (at my age too) after 'Tremaine,' what Mrs. Austen says is thought can be true,—that De Clifford is more vigorous and equally fresh with 'Tremaine.'

"And so, repeating thanks and good wishes, I am, as usual, yours,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, April 25, 1843.

"DEAR PATMORE,—No end to my thanks to you. This day's —— is more glowing even than the last. You are certainly resolved to allay any anxiety I might have (even were it greater than it is) as to the fate of 'De Clifford.' You have, I have no doubt, also given the tone to others, whose proofs of favour, through to-day's post, in addition to those during the week, have flowed in beyond imagination. Can you help me to find out the authors of some of them, especially of the article in the 'Britannia'? If Dr. ——, who I heard wrote in that paper, I shall be flattered. There was also a notice in the 'Morning Herald,' of last Tuesday (the 20th), very eloquent indeed, and very clear; perhaps, yours? If not, I should really like to know by whom, if you can help me.

"Many private letters (one from a gentleman, a Mr. Stevens, whom I don't know, but evidently a person of reading and education,) ought also to satisfy me that I have got the town with me, and, as Pope said, 'I will

therefore not fear the highflyers of Button's.'

* * * * * *

"I see you have lost your dramatic mentor and neighbour Reynolds, who agreed so with me about your comedy. I have no patience with your modesty, and have long hoped said comedy would be in rehearsal. I also wish to hear more of your decision as to your other manuscripts, actual or intended. Pray write to me when you can, though I know how much you must be engaged. Meantime, believe me, always yours,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, May 2, 1841.

"My DEAR PATMORE,—While I thank you for your letter, all I can say in answer to it is that you are a comical fellow, if that term can apply to a man who honestly confesses what I, for one, have long found out—that he is troubled with a morbid sensibility. I am in twenty minds whether, even now, though you have returned it, I will not still send my letter to Sir John. The *awkwardness* to me is nothing in comparison with a wish

to do what you may think might be becoming in you. I am restrained, therefore, only by your positive injunctions.

"C. is a funny little fellow, with his silence, and his shrewdness, and his procrastination. If *he* is satisfied with the reception of "De Clifford," *I* certainly am. It is beyond what I could hope, far more expect, and no post but brings me an account of its success.

"Best of all, I am held to be *Manners*. It could not please me more. And so no more at present from your friend,

"R. P. W.

"Since writing the above I have a letter from Mrs. Austen. She says there is a 'most beautiful' review of De C. in the 'New Monthly,' which she attributes to Theodore."

XXI.

MR. WARD'S EDITORSHIP OF "CHATSWORTH."—HIS CRITICISMS AND SUGGESTIONS ON VARIOUS PORTIONS OF IT.

In giving to the world the letters which follow, and one other which has preceded them, containing detailed as well as general references to a work of my own, since published, entitled "Chatsworth; or, the Romance of a Week," I feel myself called upon to explain my reasons for doing so, which are as follows:—1st. Up to the period at which the present pages come before the public, "Chatsworth" has been almost universally attributed to Mr. Plumer Ward, though his name stands in its title-page as *editor* only. It was even spoken of as "his latest work," in at least three of the biographical notices of him that appeared in as many respectable quarters shortly after death. 2dly. It seems imperative upon me to show, that Mr. Ward's formal denial, in the 'Literary Gazette,' of having written a single line

of "Chatsworth"—which denial he felt to be called for on finding himself treated by that and by *all* the other periodicals of the day who criticised the work, as its author—by no means warranted the injurious inference that was drawn from it, that he had merely "lent his name" to the work, without fulfilling the duties implied by the phrase "edited by," &c. The truth is, that every page of it passed through Mr. Ward's hands in MS., as well as in its after passage through the press; that no chapter—scarcely a page—of the work but derived benefit from his valuable advice and suggestions; and that nothing but his willingly-accorded consent to "stand sponsor" to the work (the phrase is his own), and his repeated urging of its publication, induced me to risk the step of calling attention to a series of compositions, the severely simple and almost antique character of which seemed to render their reception more than doubtful, if put forth anonymously, or with a name little known to the reading public.*

* Even with the advantage of Mr. Ward's name as editor, I felt that these "Tales of the Olden Time" would run the risk of falling stillborn from the press,

Interesting to the reading world as anything from Mr. Ward's pen must be, and especially anything relating to the art of which he was so consummate and successful a master, I should certainly have withheld these letters, and others of a similar character, but that, for the foregoing reasons, they clearly belong to the literary history. of the time.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.*

"Okeover, June 18, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—I shall be glad if I am able to accomplish a letter to you to-day, even a short one; but as there is no post to-morrow, though I am more worried by very different matters than I can explain to you, I do not like to lose another day in telling you how much I have been struck with Evadne.

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lacking a framework constructed after those "fashionable" models which even such writers as the Bulwers, D'Israelis, and the author of "Tremaine" himself, felt themselves at that day called upon to adopt, in order to secure attention to their lucubrations.

* The high panegyrics in this letter apply almost exclusively to the original scenes of "The Maid's Tragedy," of which the story is only a prose version.

"By the way, it has occurred to me that that would be a more terse and striking title than the 'Faithful and Faithless;' and the superior interests and wonders that belong to the lady seem to demand it. But this for your better judgment.

"Well, but the lady herself! She is really superb; heroically wicked, absorbing, commanding! One of the very best drawn characters, and placed in almost the situation of most burning interest, I ever encountered in play or story.

"The meeting in the bridal chamber; the terrific announcements; its effects; the contests it produces; the dreadful state of her husband; his partial and temporary recovery in a delicious scene of nature and innocence, so deliciously painted; the consequent interview and struggle with Melantius; the communication of the dreadful secret, and the vengeful resolve that follows; all this, I do assure you, fixed me as much as anything I ever read, and would rank with anything short of the very best parts of Shakspeare.

"Can I say more? Yes! that it gives me

the highest idea of your imaginative powers, while the forcible and pathetic language, which never fails, whether for pity, or rage, or excitement of any kind, shows a dramatic power which, perhaps, I may affront you by saying I did not know belonged to you. It certainly made me wish, scene after scene, and line after line, that the tale had been a drama. How well would it have acted! As it is, I think it must charm, having so much of the three requisites, grandeur, novelty, and beauty.

"Aspasia is, what she is meant to be, interesting, though thrown into shade by Evadne. She is, however, necessary for the action; and I would wish to canvass her, as she at present stands, chiefly on account of the bursts of blank verse which with her first appear. The lines are in themselves so touching, that here again you show a new instance of your qualifications for stage writing.* I would, therefore, wish to preserve

* The lines of verse above referred to are adopted literally from the original drama by Beaumont and Fletcher. Mr. Ward did not know this at the time he wrote the above and what immediately follows.

them; and if we can by any means justify the mingling of them in a prose composition, I hope they may stand.

"Johnson blames the introduction of rhyming in Comus, in the midst of blank verse, and this is somewhat of that nature. But I know not that he was right; and if a fault, its beauty in Comus makes us forget it, and so we may here.

"You talk of some precedents in the old dramatists; but then, they *were* dramatists. Were this a play, and Aspasia actually mad (she is almost so), I should not have a scruple.

"Pray think about it. Perhaps, if in your arrangement the story is to be supposed to be recounted in very ancient times, it may be sooner admitted. As it is, I rather tremble for the *keeping*. If any one could talk blank verse in a prose tale, it would be Flora McIvor. But how would it have looked?

"After all, the tale would not suffer by *disarranging* the syllables, and making them return to prose, without losing much either of their force or sweetness, which, under your management, might, I think, be easily

done. All this applies also to the blank verse of Amintor. What say you to it?

"I am not here afraid of your answer, whatever it may be; I am as to another question of far more consequence. What will you say to me if I propose to you to alter the *dénouement*, and make the king die by the hand of Melantius, instead of Evadne? For, not to mention that Evadne's sudden conversion and remorse—(the arguments producing which are not brought forward, and which, if they were, ought to fail, in order to be in keeping with her grand character)—not to say that this is not natural, what a noble scene might you work out, and in what noble language, by making Melantius put forth all his high energies, like Junius Brutus or Virginius of old, and produce revolt against a profligate king, the destroyer of his honour!

"It seems to me that this would be far grander, and more in unison with the more exalted parts of his character, than to let him be the mere instigator of his sister to murder the man whom, with her whole soul, both from love and ambition, she idolized.

"The difficulty and improbability of this is

so great, that we do not believe in the facility with which Evadne is wrought upon to a thing seemingly so unnatural to her; no part of her previous character prepares you for it, and all we know of her absolutely forbids it. She glories in her love for, and being loved by, the king; and a great scene might, I think, be worked out between her and her brother, in which *her* scorn and *his* nobleness and pride of feeling might greatly show. She might, too, more characteristically sacrifice herself, on being thus thwarted in her ambition, and losing her lover, than, as she now does, for being scorned by a person whom she has always scorned, and who deserves little else at her hands.

"I assure you I am very serious in this, and long to see how you will manage such a revolt, and such a death for Evadne, with whom remorse and penitence, and, above all, love for Amintor, can have nothing to do. Like the high-souled Satan, she should be inexorable in her ambition.

"I know not what to say of the death of Aspasia. I would spare her if I could; and the higher interest of the tale, in all that

concerns Evadne and Melantius (if you make him the hero I wish), seems so absorbing, that we could dispense with her death as necessary to add to our feeling. Besides, I own I do not quite see the necessity for that death by Amintor's hand, and still less the manner of it. She should die of a broken heart, or, like Ophelia, 'chanting snatches of old tunes,' and mad.

"I own her bold disguise and bold bearing in beating Amintor into a combat, in order that he may kill her, do not seem to accord with her soft and feminine character, however she might wish to die on his sword.

"There is also something in the management of the scene of her death, which wants correction. We know not why or how she can lie so long neglected after her mortal wound, even though Evadne's entrance diverts Amintor from her. But if my hint as to Evadne and Melantius is taken, there will be no necessity for this, and at any rate it may be easily rectified, though I would rather the whole scene of the combat should be avoided by her dying, *if she must die*, in some other way.

"I see no reason, if you adopt my hint, why Amintor may not be made a strenuous ally of Melantius, in avenging his wrongs (which are almost still more Amintor's wrongs) on the king. This, too, would give him some of the elevation of character he wants, and by making him more worthy of Aspasia than he is, dispose of them both with more poetical justice, and pleasanter feelings to the reader, than as at present arranged.

"The wind-up, however, in describing the fate and character of Amintor, is extremely fine; and there are touches of pathos in Aspasia which I would not, and, I think, need not, lose. 'Tis but my poor body, my heart died long ago' absolutely electrified me. But this might be preserved, although her fate be changed.

"Such are the feelings inspired by your tale, which, as it is, is rich and glowing, but, I think, might be rendered still more so, if you approve and will work upon my hint. I really long for it, and till I hear how you take it, need say no more. So good bye.

"You shall hear again upon the other MS., and in answer to your important letters,

both of which I am sorry to postpone amid some very plaguing business that bothers and torments me.

"I am better, however, and my daughter too, your kind occupation with whose case I have never forgotten.

"Believe me, then, ever yours,

"R. P. W."

XXII.

LETTERS TO P. G. PATMORE CONTINUED.—MR. WARD'S OPINIONS OF MRS. GORE, MRS. TROLLOPE, GALT, GLEIG, &C.

THE following letters will, for the most part, speak for themselves.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover, July 5, 1841.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—Though I have neither head nor heart for writing—the one being tortured with rheumatism, and the other weighed down with anxiety,—I seem to have treated you so ill by my long silence, that I make the attempt.

"You know, perhaps, by this, that I did not accompany my mournful wife and the poor invalid to town.

"I stayed behind partly because I could not brave London, when my heart was so full upon so sad an occasion, where daily suspense, too, as to her fate, was worse than bereavement; partly because, in case we were ordered to

change the climate, I had many things previously to prepare and settle here.

"I have, however, only reaped greater uneasiness from it, in consequence of the daily miseries of the post.

"Latham is not yet decided upon anything, except that there is terrible mischief, and all the good I gather is, that she is not worse.

"Well, this is a long tale, nor do I know that it will explain, as I intend it, why I have not been able to perform my promises to you of renewing the subject of your MS., though it will account for my not calling upon you, at which you must have wondered.

"I have been reading your letter of the 20th June again, and though, under your management, I absolutely long to see the plot of your striking tale altered, I fear I cannot hope for an effort of such magnitude. I enter, too, into your reasons, founded on the example of Othello, for making the king fall by the hand of Evadne, and in their very bed. But, then, I think, you should prepare us for it more; nay, make us ardently expect and wish for it, by a great deal more than appears of the feeling about it in

Melantius; and infinitely more, in regard to so wonderful a change in the character of Evadne, before such a change in our expectations could be effected.

"I am the more urgent about this, because I think it is the very subject in which your pen will shine, if you will undertake it. Remember, if you do, you must not be idle, or leave anything to conjecture, or suppose it the affair of a few lines; but must gird yourself to it—summon all your power of pathos, which is great,—in short, comply with Horace's forcible direction to the true poet,

> "'Qui pectus inaniter angit,
> Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
> Ut magus.'

"Be the *magus* in this, and I will excuse you the other (I own) adventurous attempt I proposed.

"Adieu. R. P. W."

R. Plumer Ward to P. G. Patmore.

"Brighton, August 29, 1841.

"My dear Patmore,—Your letter announces great events; and, supposing the annunciation confirmed, most truly rejoices

me. Do you know that the moment I heard of poor Hook's death, which was from Dr. Croly, at a dinner at Horace Smith's, my instant thought was that you ought, and probably would, succeed him; and I had actually prepared to write to you, to persuade your making the attempt, which, happily, it should seem, C. himself has forestalled. I need not say how I wish it, and my anxiety for it perhaps a little influences me in the answer I am about to give your letter of yesterday, for the first thing that occurred to me was that, until the thing was certain, and that you were actually installed in your new dignity, you should wave the *immediate* prosecution of your views as to your own intended publication.

"Even without a seeming leaning towards this in your letter, my opinion on this head had forcible hold of me, and I should have written as strongly as I could to advise it. You must, however, yourself be at least as forcibly impressed with the absolute necessity there is of allowing nothing extraneous to interfere, so as to hazard a possibility of losing so great an object.

* * * * * *

"I wish I could tell you anything good of my feeble girl. I hope it is not indication of the reverse, but we are totally prohibited from thinking of Okeover again, or even of England, for the next twelve months; so that our views (and that immediately) are directed to the Continent, but in the first instance to town, where we think of being in the next month.

"The blow to all my comforts, in the wane of life, is more than I can tell you, or would like to do if I could. Yours,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Brighton, Sept. 3, 1841.

"DEAR PATMORE,—Your letter has relieved me from no little anxiety on your account. * * * *

"I will certainly give you some days' notice if we go to France. Upon this head, and indeed our whole position, I am really quite unhappy. The poor sufferer is rather worse than better, and but yesterday it was quite settled that we should embark next week for Dieppe, and thence by land to

Pau. Warning was given to some of the servants, and I had the misery of thinking I should not see England for a twelvemonth—perhaps leave my bones abroad—at any rate, feel my whole plan of life broke up. To-day we have all taken fright at dragging a poor worn-out invalid six hundred miles through the dirty towns of France, and nothing is thought of but Torquay or Clifton.

"Meanwhile, the climate here and weather are of the very devil. I am burning with heat, pierced with cold, and most uneasy in mind—in short, anything but 'mens sana in corpore sano'—which one ought to be to give sweet counsel to a friend.

"Still, wherever I am, or in whatever condition, yours, my dear P., very truly,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Windsor House, Southampton,
"Oct. 20, 1841.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,—Though I am as willing as most to think no news good news, yet to know nothing for a month of an

affair interesting in itself, and, as we suppose, at least not standing still, is somewhat trying to curiosity; so I write, though for little else, to ask what you are doing or going to do. I only hope you are not ill, as, since your last accounts, might, I fear, be not unreasonably supposed.

"For ourselves, illness seems to have taken up her permanent abode in our once happy home—happy no longer. The poor sufferer is entirely given up by the regular physicians, so as a forlorn hope we have admitted an illegitimate one, who came all the way from Plymouth to try inhaling. The process is only just begun, and a few days, I am told, will decide—not a cure—but the *possibility* of it—in itself more comfort than we have hitherto been allowed.

"In regard to myself, there never was a more complete overthrow to all the happiness of my life—all old habits broken up, and, what is worse, replaced by none; so that I should be a prey to the lassitude I feel, and which is such as I never knew, if even I had no grief to feed by brooding on it.

I can settle to nothing; can think of nothing; and would willingly write for Colburn gratis, if he would but tell me what.

"Meantime, I cannot read anything but (I must not say) trash, though all I attempt are a few Novels, which by *me* ought not to be so vilified. And yet there are few I can get through. The authors, however, may say the same of mine, and I, at least, give them fair play.

"By the way, how is it that your certainly very clever friend, Mrs. Gore, cannot do more for me than skim along the surface? I never knew so much real talent in seizing the outside of characters, and drawing magic lantern pictures, so entirely fail in creating permanent interest. I have sent home 'Mrs. Armytage' a second time, without getting quite half through, and yet how clever the individual portraits!

"So I may say of Galt, Gleig, *cum multis aliis*.

"Not so 'Charles Chesterfield;'* at least there the portraits are themselves so over-

* By Mrs. Trollope.

powering, that they redeem the want of skill in the story tenfold.

"By the way, who was published first, 'De Clifford' or 'Chesterfield'? For Marchmont, and Paragraph, and Sourkrout, as far as the story goes, are so alike, as well, indeed, as the general account of reviewing, that, unless one copied the other, the coincidence is astonishing. I particularly mean Marchmont's use of phrases, ready cut and dried, for books he had not read. But Marchmont is, at all events, inimitable, and true, I am sure, though I bother my brains in vain to know the original. You, who have so much more knowledge, pray tell me. I am really anxious about it.

"I suppose 'De Clifford' has seen its zenith, and is on the wane; yet I continue to receive letters from *strangers*, as well as friends, about it; and —— tells me the Duchess of —— told her it was 'making quite a sensation on the Continent, where everybody was reading and liking it.'

"There's for you! Ought I not to have the Guelph? I think I shall ask for it! God help me for a blockhead, with all my

years and miseries bowing me down, to write even jokingly of such gewgaws! Yet here I am in a beautiful town, and a house good enough for a marquis (Conyngham), who has just quitted it, moralizing, forsooth, on the nothingness of life. O! we are very consistent people, we mortals and authors! Yet, in truth, tell me whereabouts you are in verse and prose, and who Marchmont is, and then I will tell you how much I am yours,

"R. P. W."

The following letter relates to some criticisms on those "Tales of the Olden Time" before referred to, and which were now just published, under the title of "Chatsworth; or, the Romance of a Week: edited by the author of 'Tremaine,' 'De Vere,' &c." To the surprise and confusion of its author, the whole of this work—not merely the modern introductory framework, but the antique tales themselves—was (as before related) universally described by its critics as "evidently" the production of Mr. Ward's own

pen; and his ostensible editorship was treated as a mere *ruse*. Fearing that he would be—as I felt that he justly might be—displeased and annoyed at this wholly unlooked-for result of his friendly good-nature, in assisting to call public attention to what would otherwise have missed it, I had, immediately on the appearance of two of the most conspicuous criticisms to the above effect, written to him expressing my extreme surprise and regret at the ridiculous dilemma in which his partial good-nature had placed him, and offering to do anything in the matter that he might suggest, short of openly avowing the authorship of the work, which, at that time, I earnestly wished to avoid. The following note is his reply:—

R. PLUMER WARD to P. G. PATMORE.

"Brook Street, Sunday.

"DEAR PATMORE,—The solemnity of the first part of your letter frightened me out of my wits. I thought that both author and editor were damned beyond recovery, and that all your modest fears about looking me

in the face, arose from some atrocious abuse of *me;* when, behold, it was all praises, and turned all my anxiety into amusement. Certainly, nothing can be more comically ridiculous than the deep sagacity shown by those Thebans. As certain, that if any one is to be annoyed at it, it is not I; though I ought not to array myself in borrowed plumes. If only, therefore, for *your* sake, the Thebans, by some means or other, ought to be undeceived. As I know ——, I was thinking of writing to him a mere line of *negation,* of course, without informing him who the author is. I own I should not wish the mistake to spread, having, in fact, no right to what so exclusively belongs to *you;* and if you quit your incognito, which I suppose you will, it may make it more difficult. I am therefore very glad Blanchard is not deceived, as well as that he is favourable.

"This is all I will say at present, except that if you think I have answered your questions with sufficient favour, and you really have anything of importance enough to justify the inconvenience of quitting your

dressing-gown, to visit me in mine by twelve to-morrow, I shall be glad to see you. And so we heartily bid you be of good cheer. Your sincere Jack Daw,*

"R. P. W."

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* Alluding to the "borrowed plumes."

XXIII.

MR. WARD'S LAST LETTERS AND ESSAYS.—HIS REMOVAL TO TOWN.—HIS DEATH.

THE following letters carry my correspondence with Mr. Ward to within a few days of the fatal illness which terminated in his death. Though chiefly of a personal nature, they will be read with interest, as proving that the mind of their writer (now in his eighty-first year) not merely remained unimpaired to the last, but retained those happy and happy-making qualities which had always characterised it.

The "Ambition" tracts alluded to in these letters have since been given to the world in Mr. Phipps's "Memoirs and Correspondence."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Oct. 22, 1845.

"DEAR PATMORE,—I am glad of any occasion that gives me a letter from you, but

particularly by the present one, which I cannot help hoping will end well for your son Eugene, and therefore for you.

"You may suppose I am glad to give you every information in my power, only cautioning you that it is above twenty years since I left the Ordnance, and as rules and customs may be changed, I can only tell you what prevailed in my time, without knowing whether the routine is still the same. * * *

"Pray let me hear further, as, if you succeed for the establishment, I cannot but think you lucky; as, by good conduct and seniority, the senior clerks rise, some of them to 500*l.* and even 1000*l.* a year.

"Pray remember me to Mrs. P. and your sons, and give my respects to the Baroness ——.

"I would say something of myself, but, in truth, have little satisfactory. I have more frequent, as well as more severe attacks of painful indigestion, which begin to announce the usual fate of a man who has lived far beyond his time. But I have the reverse of a right to complain, having still much to enjoy and be grateful for; amongst other

blessings, my wife's recovered health, and, with it, her beauty.

"Then, again, I have actually, spite of pain, been able to resume my pen, and have at least pleased *myself* by a number of papers on the various sorts of ambition, high and low, as it has appeared in actually existing characters, Swift, Bolingbroke, Temple, Atterbury, Lord Holland, Lords Townshend and Waldegrave, &c. Light summer reading, as you perceive, but also *un peu philosophe*, especially when we come to such an example of *No* ambition, as *White of Selborne*. Whether to publish these 'Day Dreams' (for that is their title) is very doubtful; but I have already about enough for a volume, and, at least, 'I have had my dream.'

"Adieu, dear P., and believe me very much yours,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Okeover Hall, Nov. 20, 1845.

"DEAR PATMORE,—

* * * * * *

"With respect to your pounding case, I

fear you have got into a hobble, and that the vagabond is legally in the right, and that you could only pound his donkey in the parish or manor pound. If so, the sooner and cheaper you can get out of it the better; and as one means of doing so, you might threaten him, as you have a right to do, with an action at law for even a malicious trespass.

"As to the greater point, I think I quite understand it, and have the greatest hopes of your son's ultimate success.

"It is evident, however, that your interest with the Master-General is only through your friend, and that you ought not, unless he gives the opening, to address Sir George Murray yourself. I dare say, however, from Sir George's character, his evident wish to oblige your friend will continue till it prosperously ends.

"At the same time, in your friend's precarious situation, it would secure the matter if he got a promise of the *establishment* for your son, in case of his death, leaving the time entirely to the Master-General's own convenience.

"If this can be done (and I hope your friend will not object), the thing will be done sooner or later, and it is worth waiting for.

"We still think of remaining here till Easter, unless my increasing infirmity drives me sooner to town.

"As for my 'Dreams,' though what you say about publication is very flattering, I must think a great deal before I determine. Meantime, I sometimes please myself, which is a great gain. But I am little disposed to consult C., who seems to have grown too big for us humble, sentimental people."

"Pray let me hear your progress, and believe me ever much yours,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Lieutenant-Governor's, Chelsea College,
"May 11, 1846.

"DEAR PATMORE,—If you have not heard of my change of residence (not to mention perpetual and painful illness), you must wonder not to have seen me during the two months I have been in town. I therefore write to give some account of myself, and also to ask some account of you.

"The appointment of Sir George Anson to the Lieutenant-Governorship here, with the appendage of a most capacious and convenient house, took us all from Brook Street; for we had lived happily together too long to allow either to wish to separate. So I let my Brook Street house, and accompanied him here, where we are all most comfortably settled; and but for illness, which has been long and severe, we should not have a wish ungratified as to house.

"I am, however, getting decidedly better after a long confinement, having come but once to town since we came here, and much, I own, a slave to *ennui;* for my complaint is most lowering, and incapacitated me from reading or writing. I have, however, begun to look over my '*Ambition*' tracts, which amount to about a volume, though I know not in the least what to do with it, nor whether to publish it, or offer it to C. if I do. They are in the form indeed, and the continuation, of the 'Day Dreams,' some of which I believe you saw.

"I hope the Baroness is well, and beg my compliments to her—adding, that I should

have waited upon her, to thank her again for her beautiful remembrance of me, but for this *maudite* illness.

"Where is Coventry, and what about? Pray tell me all you can about yourselves, and particularly whether your boy, Eugene, has got upon the establishment, as I hope he has. And so adieu, my dear Patmore.

"Believe me, as usual—that is,

"Much yours,

"R. P. W."

Mr. Plumer Ward died tranquilly, and without pain, and in the full possession of all his faculties, on the 13th of August, 1846.*

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* As it may be convenient to the reader of these Memorials to have at hand for reference a summary of the chief events of Mr. Ward's Political and Literary Life, I subjoin a brief one in an Appendix to this volume. For the data I am chiefly indebted to the "Memoirs of the Political and Literary Life of Robert Plumer Ward, Esq., by the Hon. E. Phipps." Two vols. Murray. 1850.

HORACE AND JAMES SMITH.

HORACE AND JAMES SMITH.

I.

HORACE SMITH'S EARLY LITERARY CAREER.—HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH CUMBERLAND.—HIS UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT IN THE DRAMA.—THE FAMOUS "REJECTED ADDRESSES," REJECTED BY HALF THE LONDON PUBLISHERS.

My first communication and correspondence with Horace Smith took place several years before I became personally acquainted with him; but not till he had attained that almost unequalled popularity which his share in the famous "Rejected Addresses" conferred upon him; and as there is, I believe, no separate biographical notice of him extant, it may be convenient for the reader if I trace his literary career up to the period at which my own Recollections of him commence.

Before doing this, however, it is proper to state, that my sole reason for recording my

Recollections of a man with whom my personal acquaintance was so slight as it was with Horace Smith, is the belief that my literary correspondence with him, at the commencement of his career as a writer of Prose Fiction, has been made, by his allusion to it in his preface to "Brambletye House," a matter belonging to the literary history of the time.

Horace Smith was introduced to the literary world at a very early age, by the celebrated Richard Cumberland, whose acquaintance he made under circumstances that were characteristic of both parties. Though secretly an aspirant for literary honours (impelled thereto, probably, by the accident of his baptismal name, for all his early efforts assumed an *Horatian* character), the youthful poet was, at the time I speak of, a clerk in a merchant's counting-house in the city; but he was in the habit of indemnifying himself for the dryness and drudgery of the desk and ledger, by "penning stanzas," which were not the less calculated "his father's soul to cross," that the parent himself, an eminent solicitor, once had a similar propensity.

One of his youthful effusions, which had for its object and theme the aggrandisement of the merits of Cumberland's dramas, at the expense of those melo-dramatic monstrosities which were about this time beginning to supersede the former in popular estimation, was sent to the veteran dramatist by his young admirer, accompanied by the name and address of its writer, but without (as the latter declared when relating the story) the remotest thought of its receiving any notice from the celebrated subject of it, beyond, perhaps, a secret smile of gratified self-love on reading it; in short, as little expecting any valuable return for his venture as Whittington did from his cat. But the results (thanks to that vanity which was a leading feature in the personal character of the celebrated original of Sheridan's *Sir Fretful Plagiary*) were scarcely more remarkable in the latter case than in the former.

The future author of the most famous *jeu d'esprit* of his time was sitting at his desk one morning, in the midst of a whole counting-house full of other clerks and mercantile functionaries, when a stately old

gentleman of the old school entered, whose appearance and attire were of the most distinguished and *point-device* character,—at once marking him as a denizen of those circles with which the young dramatic amateur was only acquainted through the medium of his favourite Cumberland's comedies.

It was Richard Cumberland himself, who, after looking round him, inquired if "Mr. Smith" was within.

The counting-house boasted "two Mr. Smiths." Which of them was it that the visitor wanted?

"Mr. Smith, the poet"—was the altogether unbusiness-like and indiscreet reply; but it was sufficiently explanatory to arouse the fears and blushes of its object,—who descended from his stool—took the visitor into an adjoining room—received with mingled wonder and delight the veteran dramatist's enthusiastic commendations of, and thanks for, his verses—and thenceforth became a confirmed votary of the Muses.

At this time Horace Smith was a mere boy, with light curling locks flowing down his

shoulders. But Cumberland, with a warmth and enthusiasm not usual with him at that advanced period of his literary career, took so strong a liking to him, that he never came into the city without visiting his young *protégé*, and shortly afterwards introduced him to several of the most distinguished amateur writers of a day when amateur writing was in its glory,—under the illustrious auspices of Canning, Frere, Colonel Greville, Croker, Herries, Sir James Bland Burgess, &c.

Not long after the period now alluded to, Horace Smith made his first attempt as an amateur author, by writing regularly in conjunction with Cumberland and several of the gentlemen above-named, in a weekly newspaper, established by Col. Greville, entitled "The Pic Nic." By an appropriate coincidence, this unpaying paper, the materials of which were contributed by unpaid writers, was edited in the King's Bench, by the well-known and eccentric Mr. Coombe, subsequently known to fame as the author of "Dr. Syntax's Tour in Search of the Picturesque."

Horace Smith used to relate an anecdote, connected with the "Pic Nic," which, as it shows the readiness of his pen even at this early period (for he could not have been twenty), is worth reporting. Calling one evening at the office where the paper was got up, he found the printers in despair as to the appearance of the paper next morning, by reason of the non-arrival of the political leader,—its usual writer, Coombe, being declared *non est inventus*, and all the other regular contributors being out of town. In this emergency, the young poet of the party was entreated to try his hand at politics,—which he did, with a degree of success that (so he used to declare) made him sceptical as to the sincerity and value of all political "leaders" ever afterwards.

About the same time, Horace Smith, at the request of Cumberland, wrote, in conjunction with his brother James, several of the critical notices prefixed to the plays forming Cooke's edition of "Bell's British Theatre." They were announced as the production of Cumberland himself, who received a liberal remuneration for them from Cooke, which he

offered to share with the brothers; but they were, as yet, too "young in deed" to desire or accept payment for a "labour," the delight of which "physicked pain." The truth is, that the faculties as well as the fortunes of Cumberland, were at a period somewhat *passée;* and Horace Smith was always the most generous of men; not to mention that the inordinate commendations bestowed by Cumberland on all that Horace Smith wrote at this time, merited some return; and the conscience of the young poet would not permit him to pay them in kind.

Here is an instance of the extravagant notion which Cumberland entertained of Horace Smith's yet undeveloped powers. I give the story as related by Horace Smith himself. At a literary party, where the conversation turned on the comedy of "Love for Love," some one said, "When will the days of Congreve return?" "When that boy writes a comedy," said Cumberland, naming and pointing to Horace Smith, who was present.

In relating this anecdote, H. Smith used to add, that "on that hint he spake," in the

form of a comedy, which was moderately successful, and a farce, which was "damned" on the first night. The comedy was called "First Impressions; or, Trade in the West." The farce was called "The Absent Apothecary."

A droll incident occurred in connexion with the production of Horace Smith's comedy, on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre, in the season of 1813. The author and his friend Mr. Barnes (afterwards, and for many years, editor of the "Times"), went together into the pit, to witness the first performance. They were accompanied by a young German, who had been dining with them, but who had no notion that the play he was about to see, and help to pronounce judgment upon, was written by one of his companions. The performance went on well for some time, when, on one of the characters making some unlucky allusion to his country or countrymen, which the young German did not like, he proposed to his friends to join him in hissing the illiberality of the unknown author, and he himself set them the example, without waiting their reply. This set off

"some quantity of barren spectators" to do the like; and so nervously fearful was the conscious author of being known, and pointed at as such, that he became the most earnest and vociferous in the house, in trying to "damn" his own piece!

Horace Smith has himself related this anecdote, with a distinct asseveration of its truth. The piece, however, recovered this attack, and was played for a few nights, but was soon forgotten.

The next literary undertaking in which Horace Smith was engaged (still in connexion with his friend Cumberland), was "The London Review"—a periodical projected by Cumberland, in revenge for the well-deserved attacks upon his lumbering and twaddling "Memoirs"—then recently published. The *anonymous* principle was repudiated in this review; and, of course, it speedily failed.

Up to this period Horace Smith's name was not known beyond the literary circles he frequented, though the publication, in his friend Mr. T. Hill's "Monthly Mirror," of a series of very lively and agreeable *vers de société*, entitled "Horace in London," written

in conjunction with his brother James, had given him a specific *status* in those circles, and fully prepared them for the famous "Rejected Addresses," which, shortly afterwards, made the literary fortunes of the two brothers.

It is a fact, singularly illustrative of the "chance-medley" nature of literary success, that the MS. of the "Rejected Addresses" was offered to several publishers successively, before one could be found to take upon himself the pecuniary risk of its publication—a risk amounting to some twenty or thirty pounds merely; whereas, after it had gone through something like a dozen editions, its fortunate authors sold the remaining term of the copyright for a large sum of money, I believe a thousand pounds, and the volume has since reached a thirty-first edition.

II.

MY ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATION WITH HORACE SMITH, AND ITS RESULTS.—HIS DESTRUCTION OF "THE GENTLEMAN IN BLACK."—MY PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH HIM.

For some years subsequent to the period just referred to, Horace Smith confined his literary efforts to light and ephemeral magazine papers, in prose and verse. Having, however, in the meantime retired from city life, with a competent fortune, and, finding that the only safe and permanent road to literary fame, and large profits from it, was that which had been recently opened by Walter Scott, he determined to try his hand at a prose fiction, under the three volume novel form. And this brings me to the incident in his literary career which has chiefly induced me to offer the foregoing and subsequent details to the reader. I must premise, however, that I should not have felt myself justified in making public the anecdote and correspondence which follows, but that

Horace Smith himself has referred to it in his preface to the last edition of "Brambletye House," and in that spirit of generous and ingenuous candour, which was a marked feature of his estimable character.

Perhaps I cannot better introduce the correspondence which follows, than by giving the passage above referred to, from the preface to the last edition of "Brambletye House."

"Having learnt that I had composed a work of fiction, which, however, no one had then seen, he, Mr. Colburn, wrote me a flattering letter, offering so liberal a sum for the copyright, that, with a mingled feeling of surprise and gratification, I acceded to his proposal, and forwarded him the papers. It is customary with publishers to submit their manuscripts to competent readers, for the purposes of revision. The gentleman upon whom the task devolved in the present instance, and who was a perfect stranger to me, sent me a friendly and admirably-written letter, earnestly dissuading me from printing a work which, as he felt well assured, would disappoint the expectations of the public,

and be far from conferring upon me a degree of literary reputation to which I might justly aspire. That I was deeply mortified at this unpalatable and unexpected communication, I will not affect to deny; but, as I had implicit confidence in the sincerity, as well as the good judgment, of my adviser, I resolved instantly to suppress my unlucky attempt, and endeavour to produce something better. I got back my papers, hurried home, and for fear of any wavering in my good intentions, committed them without delay to the flames. When I compared the time and trouble my work had cost me, with the alarming rapidity of its disappearance, as sheet after sheet became converted into tinder, it must be admitted that I felt some "compunctious visitings of nature," although I endeavoured to "lay the flattering unction to my soul," that I was evincing no small degree of fortitude, in thus turning into smoke the handsome sum that I was to have received for the copyright. My next attempt assumed a historical form, and in five months I completed and forwarded, as a substitute for 'The Gentleman in Black,' the novel of

'Brambletye House.'"—*Preface to last edition of Brambletye House.*

The following is a copy of the letter referred to by Mr. Horace Smith in the foregoing statement. Its insertion seems necessary to a full understanding of that which follows it:—

"To Horatio Smith, Esq.

"Sir,—I fear you will think me officious in what I am about to say to you; but I hope, and indeed expect, that you will not think me impertinent; because you will perceive that I can have but one motive for the step I am taking. You are, of course, aware that publishers, before they finally arrange for the publication of any considerable work, are in the habit of consulting some 'literary friend' in whose judgment they think they can confide, as to the character, &c., of the work in question. In pursuance of this practice, Mr. Colburn has placed in my hands the MS. of your novel entitled 'The Gentleman in Black,' mentioning to me that it is yours, simply because he supposed that, as I am in the habit of reading all that you write,

I could not have proceeded far in the perusal of this work without making that discovery for myself.

"I have accordingly perused the work with great care; and I now, after much hesitation, and with unfeigned diffidence and embarrassment, venture to address *you*, instead of Mr. Colburn, on the subject.

"You will readily believe that I have had some difficulty in making up my mind to do this at all. But I assure you that the mode in which I am to do it is still more perplexing to me. As, however, the shortest mode will doubtless be the one least unpleasant to *you*, I shall at once adopt that. In a word, then—is *your own opinion* as to the merits of the MS. I have just read entirely settled? Of course, I mean so far as a writer can feel that he is able to judge of his own work. And if your opinion about it *is* settled, have you fully made up your mind to give this work to the world?

"As I am not in a position to obtain replies to these questions, I must go on to say—if you have not fully determined on the publication of the 'Gentleman in Black,' let meentreat you to reconsider of it, and to place

the MS. in the hands of some literary friend (if such an one there be), who has at once a sufficiently sincere regard for you, personally, to dare to tell you the truth, and a sufficiently firm judgment to prevent his opinion from being biassed by that regard.

"I could willingly stop here, but as I have voluntarily 'tied myself to the stake,' it would be cowardice not to 'fight the course.' I will therefore add, that if, instead of being a stranger to you personally, I were such a friend as I have just fancied, I should earnestly entreat you not to publish the work at all.

"Probably if I were *saying* this to you instead of writing it, your first question (if you chose to listen to me at all on the subject) would be—'Why?' And the reply to it would puzzle me not a little. But as it is, I find the reply still more difficult; for to go into any *detailed* remarks on your work, without being able to judge whether or not you are likely to have perused this letter even thus far, without throwing it into the fire, *would* be an impertinence. I must, therefore, content myself with saying, gene-

rally, that a most careful perusal and consideration of your MS. has convinced me that it cannot be published *as yours* without greatly injuring your reputation—or rather, that it cannot be published at all without doing so; because, whether you avow it or not, it must and will be known as yours.

"Perhaps, as I have been tempted to say thus much, I ought to proceed into something like detail, in order to bear out the general opinion I am expressing. But (to say nothing of my fear that I have already said too much) I not only expect, but earnestly *hope*, that *my* opinion—the value of which, whatever it may be, you cannot possibly know—will have no further influence on you than to induce you to reconsider the matter yourself, and to procure the opinion of some other person on whom you *can* depend.

"And now, Sir, I really feel myself called upon to apologise for addressing the above observations to you, and to suggest—I had almost said to invent—excuses for so doing. But perhaps the real reason for doing a thing is always, between honest men, the best after all, both for giver and receiver. The truth,

then, is, that if I had not known whose the work in question was, I should simply have expressed my opinion about it to Mr. Colburn purely as a matter of business, and then not have thought or cared anything more about the consequences of that opinion, except in so far as they might affect the interests of the gentleman who placed the work in my hands. I hope you will not think I am increasing rather than excusing the obtrusiveness of this letter, when I add, that, on finding the work to be yours, I read it with very different feelings from what I otherwise should. In fact, I have never read the most trifling of your essays in the periodicals of the day without being not only amused but bettered by the perusal; and even from them, but still more from what I have been in the way of hearing from persons who have been long acquainted with you, I had conceived a personal respect for your character, which has tempted me to do an unusual, and I still almost fear you may think an impertinent thing, in order to induce you to pause, and seriously reconsider, before you finally determine on doing what may (and what in my

opinion most certainly will) not only not increase, but greatly diminish that literary reputation which you now enjoy, and which, though comparatively circumscribed, is perhaps the most enviable one possessed by any literary man of the present day.

"In order that what I have now said may not place or leave you in any uncertainty as to your position with Mr. Colburn in this matter, I think it necessary to add that I have not taken this step without letting him know that I intended, or rather that I desired, to do so; for if he had expressed any objection to my offering you the advice I have now ventured to give, I should have felt myself bound *not* to offer it—for reasons which will be obvious to you.

"It may be proper for me to add further, that, in case you should still determine on publishing this novel, nothing that I either have said or need say to Mr. Colburn respecting it will be calculated to interfere with any arrangements that you may wish to make with him—my general opinion of the work being that, even without your name, it is likely to meet with a fair share of success, and that

with your name its mere *popular* success can scarcely fail to be very considerable.

"In conclusion, let me say, that if my name would give any additional weight to the opinion I have expressed above, I should feel no hesitation in subscribing it; but it would not. I should therefore only be taking a still further liberty in subscribing it.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"* * *."

To this letter the writer received the following reply:—

"No. 14, Regent Street, Friday,
"Nov. 12, 1824.

"Sir,—Beginning with thanking you most cordially for the frank, friendly, and delicate manner in which you have executed your unpleasant commission respecting my attempt, I beg to assure you, that if we had known one another personally (a pleasure and advantage to myself which I still hope to enjoy), you would have felt little or none of that difficulty and embarrassment to which you allude. Always distrustful of my own trifling productions, nobody has been more

astonished than myself at the incommensurate notice which some of them have obtained; and I am, therefore, not less sincerely obliged to any friend for his opinion, than disposed to yield to it an implicit obedience. Hearing that such a thing was in existence, Mr. Colburn, with his usual promptitude and liberality, wrote to make me an offer for my novel, which I accepted, as he can confirm to you, on two conditions—*first*, that my name should not be committed; and, *secondly*, that it should be submitted to some competent person to decide upon its fitness for publication at all. Some little deviation has certainly taken place from the former condition in the way it was announced in the last 'New Monthly;' but it is unimportant now, as your friendly advice will of course induce me to make an immediate *auto-da-fé* of Mr. Isaac Spurlingford and all his heretical associates. As leisure offers, however, I may make another, and I hope a better, effort against the season of next year, which I should put into Mr. Colburn's hands; and nothing would give me more confidence than the prospect of looking forward to the same

able and judicious counsel which, I verily believe, has done me an essential service in the present instance. On Mr. C.'s account, even more than on my own, I am happy that I was provident enough to stipulate for this previous supervision.

"It might look like affectation were I to say that I am not vexed at having misspent my time. But I can from my heart declare, that the sentiments of esteem with which you are pleased to honour my character as a man, more than compensate any little disappointment which I may feel as a scribbler.

"Again begging you to accept my sincere acknowledgments, I am, Sir, your obliged and grateful servant,

"HORATIO SMITH."

It should seem, from Mr. Horace Smith's statement in the extract I have given from his preface to "Brambletye House," that the remonstrance which was the chief object of the following letter, as to his intended precipitate sacrifice of his first attempt at novel-writing, either came too late or was disregarded:—

"To Horatio Smith, Esq.

"Sir,—Mr. Colburn has just given me your letter, the terms of which, I need scarcely say, are very gratifying to me. It tempts me, however, to take the liberty of addressing you a second time—partly with a view to correct an error into which you appear to have fallen in respect to my first letter; but chiefly on another account.

"You speak of the 'unpleasant commission' which I have executed. This makes me fear that you may have received my letter as the result of an *understanding* between Mr. Colburn and myself, that *that* would be the best mode of making you acquainted with the opinion which, according to your express wish, he had obtained respecting your work. I am anxious that you should not suppose this to have been the case, simply because, in point of fact, it was *not* the case. If it had been so, I should then indeed have been executing 'an unpleasant commission'—or rather it would have been one that I should have refused to execute at all—because I consider that my only fair excuse for venturing to address you was (if I may

so express it) that *personal* feeling which I had accustomed myself to entertain in regard to you; and which 'excuse' would, in fact, have been one of those which are more properly written 'pretence,' if I had been executing a mere 'commission.'

"I will say no more on this point. Indeed I am afraid you may already think I am 'considering too curiously'—especially as I feel that the point in question would not, of itself, have entitled me to trouble you a second time.

"My chief reason for addressing you now is the hasty determination (you must allow me to call it so) to which you seem to have come, in consequence of what I said concerning your work. I am not going to affect any particular modesty in regard to the value of my opinion on a point like the one in question; and if you yourself had had any opportunity of judging as to that value, and had *then* chosen to abide by it, I should have had nothing to say. Nay—if I had gone somewhat into detail concerning the work, and given any express *reasons* for the unfavourable opinion I entertained of it,

I own that I should not have been either surprised or sorry at your feeling satisfied with them. But when you tell me that you shall at once, and without hesitation, sacrifice the result of a considerable portion of your time and thought, merely on the strength of a *general* opinion, of which (permit me to say) you cannot know the value, I feel an anxiety and responsibility which I had no intention of incurring when I ventured to address you.

"You will perhaps say that the affair is one for *your* consideration alone. But to this I must reply—not exactly, and for the reason I have just hinted at. In fact, it never for a moment occurred to me that you would think of doing more than I had urged you to do. The utmost that I anticipated or hoped from my letter was that you would pause and consider, and take further means of ascertaining whether my advice was worth attending to. I assure you that if I had wished my letter to produce any other result than this, I should have written it in different terms. If, therefore, its effect was any other, it arose from my

not having expressed myself with due clearness. As the matter stands at present, it is purely a submission of *your* judgment to *mine*—which is what I am really alarmed at incurring the responsibility of—especially as my opinion as to the propriety of suppressing the work rested almost entirely on the fact of its being *your* work, and not (as it is) a work more or less fit for publication.

"Probably your reply will still be—that all this is for *your* consideration. I cannot deny it—and I have done: for my object in troubling you now is, not to again urge anything upon your consideration, but only to absolve myself from the imputation as well as the responsibility of having presumed to offer you a judgment that could by possibility become a final one on such a point.

"Long as I fear you will find this letter, I cannot conclude it without alluding to a few words at the beginning of yours, which seem to point at the possibility of our not remaining unknown to each other. If I have never sought this pleasure, and cannot persuade myself to *seek* it even now, it is because I feel with the most unfeigned humi-

lity that I have nothing whatever to offer you (except gratitude) in return for the advantage it would be likely to afford me.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"* * *."

Whether or not Horace Smith deemed the concluding paragraph of the foregoing letter a cold and ungracious greeting of his advance towards a personal acquaintance, instead of being (as it was) a diffident waiting for a further advance on his part—certain it is that he never made any subsequent advance—nor was I anxious to receive one—believing as I did, and do, that it is not in human nature—at all events, not in *literary* human nature—to entertain feelings of complacency towards the man who has succeeded in satisfying us that we are not so clever as we had fancied ourselves. And this view of the matter was confirmed by the fact, that, when we several years afterwards become personally acquainted, Horace Smith never alluded to the subject, though, in the interim, he had, as I understood, become acquainted with the name of his volunteer adviser.

Some years after the date of the above correspondence, but before I was personally acquainted with Horace Smith, the strong feeling I had always entertained as to his literary tact and judgment, and my strong confidence in the frank generosity of his personal character, induced me to "give him his revenge," by submitting to his judgment a work, to which I attached as much value as I could persuade myself to do to anything of my own production. I had commissioned the mutual friend who handed the work to Horace Smith to let him know, if he thought proper, that the writer of the comedy and of the disparaging remarks on "The Gentleman in Black" was one and the same person, but had specially stipulated for my *name* being withheld from him. Thus the case was evidently one of that class contemplated in the well-known wish that "mine enemy would write a book." Whether the laudatory portions of the result, as given below, are to be attributed to sound judgment and honest approval, or to the generous forbearance of one who holds his too candid critic at his mercy, is more than I shall pretend to decide.

Here follow Horace Smith's remarks on the work thus submitted to his critical judgment. It was a regular comedy of the old school.*

"It is many years since I resided in London, or even saw a play there, and such marked changes have latterly occurred in the conduct of our theatres and the dramatic taste of the public, that I feel some hesitation in offering an opinion upon this comedy as adapted to an audience of the present day. But I have no difficulty whatever in declaring that, *when measured by the very best works of a similar class that I have either seen or read,*† it seems to me to be one of those genuine and legitimate comedies that *ought* to command a great and undoubted success. Its merits are of a high order—sterling—indisputable; and, if they be not recognised as such, I can only repeat that the public taste must have been changed very much for the worse.

"So much for the *general* impression pro-

* This comedy has just been published, under the title of "Marriage in May Fair."

† The italics are the writer's own.

duced by its perusal. Now, for the objections that have occurred to me, and which, very probably, would *not* have occurred to me had I been more conversant with the actual stage.

"I don't like the title, which will tempt the wags to turn the play into ridicule, should it not be very favourably received, and which may be avoided by prefixing the word 'assumed,' or 'affected.'

"The first act, I think, would bear a little compression. In these days, when so much bustle is required, I would not make the whole act (however the unities may be preserved) consist of only one scene. Change of scene, even from one room to another, keeps attention awake, and assists an audience, just as a frequent division into chapters enlivens a reader.

"Act ii., p. 2. I agree with Mr. Ward, in thinking that it is rather hazardous to say too much about Belton's *wit;* for it makes it deuced difficult to write up to your own character. Parts of this act recal 'The School for Scandal;' and, in the next act, I was reminded of 'The Road to Ruin;' but in neither case is there anything more than

a *general* resemblance, nor anything that I would alter.

"Act iv., p. 1. Lady Falkland's talking of a separation, on so very slight a foundation, is too strong. Might she not say,—'Some wives, if they were thus treated, would insist on a separation,' &c.

"Act v., last scene. If Belton is to be dismissed without any redeeming traits, or feelings of repentance, I think he gets off too cheaply. Couldn't he be more completely humiliated and exposed? Nor would I dismiss him with a threat that points to a duel, and leaves a doubt upon the minds of the audience whether the comedy, after all, may not have a *tragic* conclusion.

"I agree with Mr. Ward in thinking that more might be made of *Emma*,—particularly in some scenes with her brother, and that she is unnecessarily lowered by being so very easily bestowed upon *Wildgoose*. I am also of opinion, that the audience ought to be let into *Madame Beaumonde's* honest intentions, that they might sympathise with her, as she proceeds to carry them into effect, and enjoy more the defeat of *Belton*.

"I have now stated every objection that

occurred to me,—many of which, as it will be seen, are extremely frivolous; but I wished to state my impressions fully and candidly. Let me repeat, however, I am no judge of dramatic writing as it is now pursued, and that, if the author of such a comedy as this cannot insure success, he has at least *deserved* it. "H. S.

"6th Oct., 1838."

It was two or three years after the date last referred to, that I became personally acquainted with Horace Smith, at a literary dinner-party at the house of a mutual friend; and I have never met with a literary man, whose personal bearing was, on this first *abord*, more entirely and agreeably answerable to the social and intellectual reputation he had enjoyed for so many years: for he was at this time considerably advanced in life.

As Horace Smith had, at the period I now refer to, retired from London life, and constantly resided at Brighton, my subsequent personal acquaintance with him remained very slight. It would, therefore, be inconsistent with the plan and principle of these Recollections, for me to attempt any estimate

of his personal and intellectual character. But it may be not improper for me to record my impression, that no man ever more fully merited the enviable reputation he enjoyed, as among the most frank, amiable, and gentlemanly of men—a reputation which fairly overlaid and extinguished that which belonged to his literary pretensions, as the chief writer of the most famous publication of its day, and the author of several of our most popular and approved works of fiction. It was, in fact, the rare attainment of Horace Smith, during the time I knew him, to have nothing professional—nothing of *the author* about him—rare, I mean, in connexion with the fact, not only that he was an author by profession, but that he was so devoted to that profession, as to derive the chief pleasure and amusement of his life from the practice of it; though his worldly circumstances made its pecuniary results a matter of comparative indifference to him. The only trace of authorship that showed itself in Horace Smith, was that rare and valuable *esprit de corps*, which caused him to feel a strong and lively interest in the pretensions of all rising aspi-

rants for literary distinction, and a desire to testify that interest by every means in his power; and his house, during the whole period of his residence at Brighton, was the receptacle of all that was distinguished in the pursuit to which he had devoted the last five and twenty years of his fortunate and happy life.

The following letter will speak for itself.

HORATIO SMITH TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Brighton, 12 Cavendish Place, July 1, 1844.

"DEAR SIR,—Many thanks to you and Mr. Moxon, for the little volume of poems by your son, which I have just perused with very great pleasure; and beg leave most sincerely to congratulate you on the true feeling of poetry which they evince, and the promise they afford of his attaining no mean station in literature, since he can accomplish so much in the outset of his career. The times, we are daily told, are not poetical; but I cannot, and do not, believe, that the simple and natural effusions of the Muse will ever lose their attraction. The subject of the Woodman's Daughter is painful, but it is very

cleverly and delicately treated. As was to be expected from the youth of the writer, there is, perhaps, a predominance of love stories—an objection, if it be one, which would not have occurred to me thirty or forty years ago—when I was still older than your son. The Boccacio story of the Hawk pleases me the most, but they are all full of talent and of promise. Pray convey to the young bard my best wishes for his success, and believe me ever, dear Sir,

"Yours, very truly,

"HORATIO SMITH."

JAMES SMITH.

JAMES SMITH A WIT OF THE OLD SCHOOL.—HIS REMARKABLE PERSONAL APPEARANCE.—HIS IMPROMPTUS À LOISIR.—HIS ANECDOTES MADE TO ORDER.—HIS SHARE IN THE "REJECTED ADDRESSES."

JAMES SMITH was very different from his brother Horace in all the qualities and attributes of his mind and intellectual character, with the exception of his lively wit, amiable and popular manners, and singularly gentlemanly bearing and personal appearance. In this latter respect James Smith was all his

life a model; and this, although he had been bred and brought up in the city, and passed nearly the whole of his life there. I have never seen a man on whom was more legibly and eloquently written that comprehensive title, "Gentleman."

My first sight of James Smith, and its result, so strongly and singularly confirm this feeling, that I will venture to relate the odd circumstances attending it. I had repeatedly heard him spoken of generally in the above sense by his friends, but had not heard his personal appearance described, and had certainly not seen any portrait of him, or attempted to form to myself any specific notion whatever of his "complement extern," when, in passing up Ludgate Hill, I met a person of whom I said to myself as he passed me—"that, I think, must be James Smith."

The supposition that one could thus fix a man's identity purely by instinct, seemed so ridiculous on the face of it, that I never thought of the matter again till about two years afterwards, when I met, at the house of the late Charles Mathews, at Highgate,

my Ludgate Hill model of a gentleman, and he was introduced to me as "Mr. James Smith."

The reader will perhaps smile incredulously at this little history; but it is simply true nevertheless.

James Smith, though certainly not possessing a larger amount of wit and humour than his brother Horace, was essentially and emphatically "a wit"—in the old-fashioned sense of the age of Anne and her immediate successor. Had he lived in those days, he would have been among the favourite *habitués* of Button's and Wills's, and would have manfully asserted and maintained his station among the best of that brilliant day. As it was—though, like his brother, associating with the highest and most cultivated spirits of the day in which he lived, and fully qualified to take a distinguished place among them—unlike that gentle and genial spirit, he preferred those lower and more limited circles in which his intellectual pretensions were paramount and his supremacy undisputed: he preferred the green-rooms of Covent Garden and Drury Lane to Holland

House; and so anxious and determined was he to succeed in establishing the social reputation at which he aimed in both these circles, that I'm afraid there is little doubt of his having made it no unimportant part of the business of his life to manufacture beforehand the appliances and means proper to his success; so that you could never be sure of any one of his droll anecdotes, lively sallies, bitter jests, or biting repartees, that it was not *fait à loisir*. I have never met with any man, except Theodore Hook, who came into society so completely "light armed with points, antitheses, and puns" as James Smith always did, or who so skilfully managed to plant and play them off. But, unlike Theodore Hook's, they were evidently not the joyous birth of the moment, but either the growth of careful thought and deliberate concoction, or (like the stolen children of the gipsies) disfigured to make them pass for his own. I will illustrate what I have said by extracting from my diary two or three of James Smith's jokes—*débitéd* at the pleasant after-dinner-table of Charles Mathews—where chiefly I was in the habit of meeting him.

On Mathews's neighbour, Mrs. Coutts, afterwards the Duchess of St. Albans, being mentioned, James Smith related the following story, *à propos* to her early career:—"I was lately present," said J. S., "when two elderly ladies were discussing, in a stage-coach, the character and doings of Mrs. Coutts. Among other things, after going through a long list of her alleged iniquities, one of the ladies, professing to be very liberal in her estimate of the character they were handling, and not disposed to make out the subject of their discourse as worse than she really was, said that she had just been reading a biographical sketch of her life, in the course of which, in describing the various blandishments she had used to attract and gratify her aged patron, it was stated (in a quoted line of verse) that she had—

"Hopped in his walks, and gambolled in his sight."

"Now, ma'am," said the speaker, "this I take to be a piece of scandal; and scandal about *any* woman is what I never will encourage or circulate. Mrs. Coutts has plenty of faults, no doubt; but I don't think she

gambles—at least, I have never heard that she does."

On the same day, he told a story in illustration of the blissful ignorance of a certain city millionaire. A friend met him at Brighton, just after he had been shampooed by the celebrated black man, Mahomet; and he was saying that, though he had undergone the operation a great many times, he didn't find that it had done him any good. "Then," said his friend, who we may suppose to have been a joker of the James Smith school, "I suppose you consider that he is Mahomet the Impostor." "Oh no!" said the good-natured Sir William, as if shocked at the idea of saying anything that might hurt the poor man's reputation—"Oh no! I don't say that—I don't say that."

Now these stories, droll as they are, bear something upon the face of them which more than indicate their origin to have been the brain of the relator; and it was the same with nearly all James Smith's *spoken* facetiæ. He was a wit, certainly; but he was more of a *wag* than a wit, and more of a pleasant, because well-conditioned egotist than either.

This view of James Smith's intellectual pretensions, as compared with those of his younger brother, the simple-hearted, kindly, generous, and unpretending Horace, is confirmed by the fact that all, or nearly all, the best parts of the "Rejected Addresses" were written by the latter. This is the case with the Byron, Scott, Moore, Fitzgerald, &c.

Though living to an advanced age, and devoted during the whole of his life to the duties of an absorbing profession;* and though during the last fifteen years of that life he was a martyr to bodily infirmities, and for years before his death could only move about on crutches, James Smith nevertheless preserved to the last that gaiety of heart, that cheerful temperament, and that "spirit of youth," which, in fact, were the main secrets of his social as well as his literary success.

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* He was at an early age articled to his father, an eminent legal practitioner, and solicitor to the Ordnance, and succeeded him in the latter appointment.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

I.

MY FIRST INTERVIEW WITH HIM.—HIS SINGULAR PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND MANNERS.—HIS HABITS OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH.

My acquaintance with William Hazlitt commenced before his name emerged from the "illustrious obscurity" of that private and local fame which had gathered round it, in the small coterie to which he had till then addicted himself, and just as it was rising into that "bad eminence" to which the abuse and scandal of his political and personal enemies (not unaided by his *friends*) soon after lifted it. My first interview with him took place in the committee-room of a literary institution, of which I was at that time one of the managers, and had been deputed by my colleagues to arrange with Hazlitt respecting the details of a course of

lectures, which it was proposed he should deliver in the theatre of the institution; an office to which he had been recommended by an influential member of the institution, the late Mr. Alsager, of the "Times" newspaper.

Having been previously cautioned not to be surprised or repelled by any "strangeness" that I might observe in Hazlitt's manner and personal appearance, I was shown into the room where he was by the librarian, who merely named each to the other, and then left us together.

On entering, I saw a pale anatomy of a man, sitting uneasily, half on half off a chair, with his legs tucked awkwardly underneath the rail, his hands folded listlessly on his knees, his head drooping on one side, and one of his elbows leaning (not resting) on the edge of the table by which he sat, as if in fear of its having no right to be there. His hat had taken an odd position on the floor beside him, as if that, too, felt itself as much out of its element as the owner.

He half rose at my entrance, and, without speaking a word, or looking at me, except with a momentary and furtive glance, he sat

down again, in a more uneasy position than before, and seemed to wait the result of what I might have to say to him, with the same sort of desperate indifference with which a culprit may be supposed to wait the sentence of his judge, after conviction. He was to learn from me whether his proffered services, as a lecturer, were accepted or rejected: and, to a man of his habits and temperament, and under his circumstances, either alternative took the shape of an intolerable penalty—like those to Romeo, of "Death" or "Banishment." If the lectures he proposed to deliver were rejected, he probably did not know where to meet the claims of to-morrow. On the other hand, if they were accepted, his condition was still more trying: for I learned from him that not a line of the lectures were written, nor even their materials prepared; they had been merely *thought of*. It was a case, too, in which punctuality was indispensable; yet such were his uncertain and desultory habits, that the fulfilment of an engagement to be at a given place and time, on a given day, for ten successive weeks, then and there to

address a miscellaneous audience for "an hour by Shrewsbury clock," was what few who knew him could have believed to be among possible contingencies.

The picture which Hazlitt presented when I first saw him in the little dark, dungeon-like committee-room referred to, was not unlike that of Sir Joshua's "Ugolino." There he sat, his anxious and highly-intellectual face looking upon vacancy; pale and silent as a ghost; emaciated as an anatomy; loose, unstrung, inanimate, as a being whose life is leaving it from sheer emptiness and inanition. And this "poor creature" (as he used sometimes to call himself)—apparently with scarcely energy enough to grapple with an infant or face a shadow—was the launcher forth of winged words that could shake the hearts of princes and potentates, and make them tremble in their seats of power; this effigy of silence was the utterer of floods of indignant eloquence, that could rouse the soul of apathy itself, and stir the blood like the sound of a trumpet; this "dish of skimmed milk" was the writer of the celebrated replies to "Vetus,"

in the "Times" newspaper; the invectives of the "Catalogue Raisonné;" and the essays on "the Spirit of Monarchy," and "the Regal Character." Nay, more—he was the only man of letters in England who had dared openly to stand by the French Revolution, through good and through evil report; and who had the magnanimity never to turn his back on its "child and champion."

Though nothing worth particular record occurred in this my first interview with William Hazlitt, I have been tempted to dwell on it thus long, because it has left a more vivid and picturesque impression on my mind than any subsequent one, except the last, which took place when he was on his death-bed.

It was not till two or three years after the period above referred to, that a strict intimacy commenced between Hazlitt and myself, and that I had the full and fair means of appreciating his remarkable, and in all respects self-consistent character. I shall, therefore, not dwell upon the intercourse which ensued upon our first acquaintance, except to contrast the impression I gained

of him before I really knew him, with that which was the due and just result of an intimate and unrestricted insight into his mental and moral constitution—a contrast which may, in some degree, account for the strangely contradictory feelings and impressions which prevailed in the world respecting him, according to the amount of actual knowledge or ignorance possessed, concerning his character and the springs of it. I remember the time —and I remember it without shame, because the impressions under which I then felt and spoke of Hazlitt were the *natural* ones—that is to say, the only ones naturally resulting from the circumstances under which I had formed my judgment—I remember the time when no words could express the horror I felt at the (supposed) personal character of William Hazlitt, or were deemed too strong to openly set forth those feelings. But my first impressions were derived, not from my own observations, but from the report of those who ought to have known better, and who certainly would have known better, had not their personal feelings been enlisted into the cabal against him, either by their having

been the subject of one of those insane assaults that he was every now and then making on his best friends, under a false (or true) impression of their occasional treatment of him, or (still worse) in consequence of some "good-natured" acquaintance repeating some of those unpalatable truths which Hazlitt was in the habit of telling of *all* his friends in their absence. For he professed to lay no restraint upon his tongue in this particular: he considered the foibles of our friends to be as fair game as those of our enemies, always provided they were pursued and hunted down without the cognizance of the owner. He recognised no Game Laws in this particular. The axiom which bids us "never speak ill of a man behind his back" (as if one might do it with propriety before his face!), was not one of those ranked by Hazlitt among "the wisdom of nations." On the contrary, he spoke what he thought of people, everywhere but in their hearing; —trusting (rather too implicitly, I am afraid) to that tacit compact which recognises the sacredness of social intercourse. And he cared not what you said of him in return,

nor if he heard your injurious estimate of him repeated by half the town; or if he sought to make reprisals, it was on the hawker, not the originator, of the affront. But a *personal* slight or incivility he held to be the most unpardonable of offences, and to be punished and avenged as such. You might think and call him a rascal or a reprobate as much as you pleased; you might "prove" him to be a bad writer and a worse man, with perfect impunity; but if you looked askance upon him in company, or "cut" him in the street, or even gave him reason to fancy that you had done so, there was (as we shall see hereafter), no limit to the revenge he would take on you, and no rest for him till he had taken it.

But I will not go further wide of my intended mark, which is that of painting William Hazlitt as I knew him; not describing or estimating his general character, but leaving the reader to form an estimate for himself, from the personal traits that I may be able to furnish, in addition to those which may be gathered from his writings.

Our first interview, as above alluded to,

lasted but a few minutes, and was concluded by an arrangement for the early delivery of a course of lectures—those on the Comic Writers ; and I saw nothing more of William Hazlitt till a day or two before the delivery of the first lecture, when I addressed a note to him, stating my intention of giving a critical notice of the lectures in "Blackwood's Magazine," and asking him for such facilities as he might choose to afford me, with a view to offering specimens of the matter. His reply was a request to see me at his residence in York Street, Westminster.

II.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS CONNECTED WITH HIM.—HIS HOUSE IN YORK STREET, FORMERLY THE RESIDENCE OF MILTON.—HIS TALK OF WORDSWORTH, SOUTHEY, AND COLERIDGE.—HIS PASSION FOR TRUTH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

It is, perhaps, worth remark, that my early intercourse with William Hazlitt has left on my memory a singularly vivid impression of the *local* circumstances and objects connected with it. I remember every room in which I have seen him, as clearly as if I were now sitting in it, and the exact situation and attitudes in which I was accustomed to see him sit or stand when conversing with him. I make the observation, because it would not be applicable to my intercourse with any other of the distinguished men of the day. The reason probably is, that our susceptibility to external impressions at any given time, and our consequent power of retaining them, is proportioned to the *interest* we feel

in the immediate source of those impressions. I have not slightly or unduly appreciated and enjoyed the intercourse that has fallen to my lot with a large proportion of the remarkable men of our day, in every department of human acquirement; but I have never been induced to feel that any one of them claimed or justified that profound intellectual study which I was always (in spite of myself) called upon to apply in the case of William Hazlitt; or it may be that he alone was always *susceptible* of that study, by reason of the beautifully simple and natural cast of his character; in which spring and evidence of true greatness of capacity, I do not believe him to have been surpassed by any man that ever lived. If "to know a man truly were to know *himself*," then was William Hazlitt's character, though the least common in the world, so legibly written in his daily conduct and converse, that for those who saw much of him to mistake it was next to impossible. Yet no character was ever so mistaken and misrepresented.

Leaving the *onus* of this charge to be

divided between the wilful blindness of his friends and the wilful falsehood of his enemies, I will say, that I believe the certainty of not coming away empty-handed was the secret of the strong and unwearied interest that I always felt in his society, even at the very time when I felt an inexpressible horror and dread of his supposed personal character,—as was the case at the time I am now speaking of. From all that I had heard, both from his enemies (and even from his so-called friends) and the little I had hitherto seen for myself, I looked upon him, personally, as little better than an incarnate fiend: and those who recollect the *looks* that occasionally came over him (as if, against his will, to warn bystanders of their danger) will scarcely deem this an exaggerated description of the feeling. Yet my desire to see and know him was not the less strong and urgent; and hence, as I conceive, the peculiar vividness with which I retain my impressions of the local circumstances under which we met.

I went to him in York Street, in consequence of the note referred to above; and, though I have never since (until this mo-

ment) attempted to recal the scene, it lives before me now as if it were of yesterday. On knocking at the door, it was, after a long interval, opened by a sufficiently "neat-handed" domestic. The outer door led immediately from the street (down a step) into an empty apartment, indicating an uninhabited house, and I supposed I had mistaken the number; but, on asking for the object of my search, I was shown to a door which opened (a step from the ground) on to a ladder-like staircase, bare like the rest, which led to a dark bare landing-place, and thence to a large square wainscotted apartment. The great curtainless windows of this room looked upon some dingy trees; the whole of the wall, over and about the chimney-piece, was entirely covered, up to the ceiling, by names written in pencil, of all sizes and characters, and in all directions—commemorative of visits of curiosity to "the house of Pindarus."* There was, near to the empty fireplace, a table with breakfast things upon it

* The house had been the residence of Milton, and now belonged to Jeremy Bentham, over whose garden it looked.

(though it was two o'clock in the afternoon); three chairs and a sofa were standing *about* the room, and one unbound book lay on the mantelpiece. At the table sat Hazlitt, and on the sofa a lady, whom I found to be his wife.

My reception was not very inviting; and it struck me at once (what had not occurred to me before) that in asking facilities for criticising William Hazlitt in "Blackwood's Magazine," I had taken a step open to the suspicion of either mischief or mystification, or both. However, I soon satisfied him that my object and design were anything but unfriendly. To be what he called "puffed" in so unlooked-for a quarter was evidently deemed a god-send; it put him in excellent humour accordingly; and the "Lake Poets" being mentioned, and finding me something of a novice in such matters (and moreover an excellent listener), he talked for a couple of hours, without intermission, on those "personal themes," which he evidently "loved best," and with which, in this instance, he mixed up that spice of malice which was never, or rarely, absent from his discourse about his quondam friends, Wordsworth,

Coleridge, and Southey, and which so strangely interfered with his general estimate of their pretensions—or rather (for such I believe to have been the case) with that perfect *good faith* with which he was accustomed to give his estimates to the world: for I believe the above-named were the only instances in which he did not say of celebrated men all the *good* that he thought, as well as the bad. But to put the seal of his critical fiat to the fame of men whom he believed to have treated him personally as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were supposed by him to have done, was scarcely in human nature.

The above was my first initiation into themes of this nature; and I must confess that the way in which Hazlitt stripped off the attributes of divinity with which I had hitherto invested those idols of my boyish worship, was not so unpalatable to my taste as I should myself have expected it to be. The truth is, we are not sorry to learn that any of our fellow-beings are less immaculate or superlative in *personal character* than our imaginations, excited by their written works,

had led us to suppose them: nor do I know that it in the least degree interferes with the effect which their works are calculated to produce upon us afterwards, or to impair those we already possess. On the contrary, it perhaps aggrandises our impressions of them, from the seeming inadequacy of the source whence they flow, and soothes our personal feelings into the belief that we ourselves are not so immeasurably inferior to these "gods of the earth" as we had been accustomed to deem ourselves. We do not think the less of Shakspeare for being told that he was a link-boy or a deer-stealer; and we *do* think very considerably less of Goethe from knowing that he was, for his worldly wisdom, deemed fit to be the privy councillor, and for his unimpeachable morals and manners the personal friend and associate, of an absolute prince. The only difference is, that after the new light has come to us, the product is thenceforth one thing, and the producer another; whereas they were before inextricably linked and blended together; and our impressions of the latter, as derived from the former, besides being altogether

gratuitous, were infinitely more likely to be the false interpretation than the true one. To which it may be added, that what the human soul instinctively yearns for and reaches after, as the hart pants for the water-brooks, is not this or that vague generality, or empty and unmeaning abstraction, but THE TRUTH. Whatever it may be, or wheresoever it may lead, truth is the goal to which the undiverted tendency of the human mind points all its affections; and it is never satisfied or at rest till this is reached. The natural and healthful condition of any given mind may, in a great degree, be estimated by the strength or weakness with which it retains and is acted upon by this bias; and the lingering love which is perpetually pointing to it, after it has been destroyed by the conventional ordinances of the world, is a proof and a measure of its original amount. We love all other things for something else not inherent in themselves; but we love the truth for itself alone. In this sense it is that "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty." We desire, first and foremost, to know *what* a thing is: it is time

enough afterwards to inquire the why and wherefore—the how and when. These are very well as matters of amusement and curiosity; but the truth is the only *pabulum* of our mental and moral existence—the only real necessity—the only veritable "staff of life." We can live by it in health and vigour, deprived of all other things; and *with* all others, *that* wanting, we pine and pule and fret away our fruitless days, in an empty and uneasy search after that which is not to be found. Nor when the truth is once attained on any given point of inquiry, is the searcher at a moment's loss in the recognition of it, nor does he seek to proceed another step in his pursuit. They say "marriages are made in heaven," and that when the objects destined for each other meet, the recognition is instant and mutual. At least it is so with Truth and the Human Soul; and it is a marriage which, when once consummated, cannot know division or divorce. We may pass from the cradle to the grave without meeting with this bride of our souls; or we may meet with a thousand "false Florizels," and

mistake each of them for the true one; but we cannot meet with the true one and mistake or reject *her*. It is not in the nature of things.

The reader will I hope excuse this digression, in favour of the occasion which suggested itself; for if ever there was a human mind devoted and self-sacrificed to the love of truth, it was that of William Hazlitt; and he pursued the search of it with a fearless pertinacity only equalled by the sagacity which pointed out and applied the means and materials of the discovery. This love of truth was the leading feature of his mind, and it was the key to all its weaknesses, errors, and inconsistencies, as well as to all its extraordinary powers and the successful application of them. He used to boast of being "a good hater." If the boast and the habit were uncharitable ones, they were the offspring of that love of truth which was the passion of his soul, and that power of eliciting it which was the great characteristic of his intellect. If, while conscious of his own errors and failings, he felt and expressed too bitter a scorn for those of others, it was because others, instead of

owning and despising their frailties as he did, insist on monstering them into virtues and subjects of personal vanity, and the world abets and encourages them in the mischievous self-deception. If, instead of being content to use his great powers in calmly exposing the false pretensions of the world to that contempt which they merit, he was too apt to seize upon them with a savage fury, and tear them to pieces, as the wild beast tears and rends the cloak that is flung upon it to blind its eyes from the attacks of its enemies, it was because his self-control was less than his detestation of the debasing consequences that spring from the admission of those pretensions; it was because it drove him mad to see whole nations, generation after generation, dragged like slaves and idiots at the chariot-wheels of a few empty and vulgar idols—bound there by liliputian threads that a breath might have broken.

This first lengthened interview of mine with Hazlitt ended by his promising to let me have the MS. of his lectures, to do what I pleased with, and we parted on a better footing than we had met; though evidently

with as little prospect as before of our ever becoming intimate associates:—for the way in which he handled his quondam friends, as above described, did anything but decrease the dread I had been taught to entertain of his personal character.

III.

HAZLITT IN THE STREETS OF LONDON.—HIS BESETTING WEAKNESS.—HIS PROTEGÉES.—HIS REVENGES FOR SUPPOSED INJURIES.

As it is of my *intimacy* alone with Hazlitt that I propose to treat in any detail, I shall pass hastily over that mere desultory acquaintance which ensued on his delivery of the lectures above alluded to. Two or three trifling but characteristic circumstances growing out of that acquaintance are, however, worth referring to.

I well remember, after the successful delivery of his first lecture on the Comic Writers, my walking home with Hazlitt from the institution to his house in Westminster. Let those who knew the personal bearing and habits of William Hazlitt, conceive of a man almost a stranger to him—who had only exchanged words with him in a sort of *official* capacity—let the intimates of Hazlitt conceive of such a person volunteering to walk home with him, for the purpose of having

a little pleasant conversation by the way! Nay, in my innocence, I actually *offered him my arm*, WHICH HE TOOK! and so we walked, arm-in-arm, through the whole of Fleet Street, the Strand, Parliament Street, &c.

The "general reader" will wonder what there was extraordinary in this; but the initiated will not believe it. They can fancy him sitting sulkily in the stocks, or walking doggedly round in the pillory; for a superior physical force might have placed him there, and being there, he was too much of a logician to quarrel with necessity. But to walk straight home at ten o'clock at night, "in a respectable and gentlemanlike manner!" It cannot have been! Arm-in-arm, too, and with a very young gentleman in a point device costume! I think I hear Charles Lamb exclaim, "Why the angel Gabriel could not have persuaded Hazlitt to walk arm-in-arm with him for half the length of Southampton Buildings." Perhaps not—but with *a writer in Blackwood's Magazine* it was different;—one, too, who had tacitly engaged to give a favourable account of him in that terror and bugbear of his

coterie. The chance was not to be thrown away; for Hazlitt, with all his boasted non-conformity, piqued himself on his prudence and world-wisdom, when he thought the occasion of sufficient moment to his personal comfort to call for these. In fact, this trait formed the only serious stain in his personal character, or rather it sprang out of that quality which was so.

Let me here, once for all, get over this only painful and repugnant portion of the task I have undertaken; for that once off my conscience, I shall go forward much more to my own satisfaction, and therefore to the reader's. In resolving to tell what I know, or have been led to feel, of William Hazlitt, I have determined to "nothing extenuate." I at once, then, confess that the plague-spot of his personal character was an ingrained selfishness, which more or less influenced and modified all the other points of his nature.

This is a hard stone to fling at a man of whom one is proud to be deemed the friend in spite of it. But now that it cannot hurt him, the truth may be told: nay, I verily

believe that, had it been told in his lifetime, in the spirit in which it is told now, he would have had the magnanimity not merely to admit the charge, but to forgive the maker of it. And if this noble frankness is not enough to wash out the "damned spot," it may at least serve—as, in fact, it did serve in practice—to prevent the spread of the poison to the vital parts of his character.

Let me still further guard against being mistaken by Hazlitt's friends and misinterpreted by his enemies. The defect which I have noticed in his character was little in amount. I never knew him do a base or mean action; and I have known him do many that might fairly claim to be deemed magnanimous, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. It would be the basest of libels upon Hazlitt to describe him as a mean-souled man. But the tendency, the taint was there; though it seldom showed itself in overt acts, and never without a sort of half-struggle to overcome it; or in default of that, a half-ostentatious exposure of the weakness, as one of which he was not merely conscious, but took to himself more shame

for it than his worst enemies would have cast upon him.

I shall leave it to those enemies to collect proofs and illustrations of this "original sin" of Hazlitt's temperament. I have done my self-prescribed duty in declaring the existence of the evil, and shall now quit the painful and ungrateful theme, after having ventured on one more remark in connexion with it. I have said that the above-named trait in Hazlitt's character was, like Othello's declension into the vale of years, "not much." I will add, that like that, it was (practically) fatal to his peace of mind; for he could not choose but be deeply conscious of it, and this gave him an ever-present sense of his own comparative unworthiness, and made him listen more eagerly to the suggestions of that self-raised demon, who, Iago-like, was ever at his elbow, urging him on to insane jealousies and suspicions of the good faith of those on whom his heart and spirit yearned to rest and repose. Hazlitt had strong and burning affections, which could never find a fit object whereon to lean for support; so that, like the projections of a disease-worn frame, at

whatever points they touched external objects, they corroded, and cankered, and turned to poisonous sores. Had Hazlitt believed that any one human being (especially one of the other sex), whatever his or her station or character, could have loved him with an undivided and unfailing love, he would have been a happy and a happy-making man. But the unfounded belief which beset him, that he was despised and contemned wherever he turned for sympathy, and the still stronger belief *that he in some sort deserved to be so*, made and kept him the most miserable of human beings.

To return to our "progress" from Blackfriars to Westminster, after Hazlitt's first lecture on the Comic Writers. I remember he declined my offered arm at first—which I interpreted as an evidence of his excessive modesty! I pressed it, however, and he then took it—but as if it had been a bar of hot iron—holding it *gingerly*, with the tips of his fingers, much after the fashion in which he used to shake hands with those friends who were inadvertent or absent enough to proffer that ceremony.

Nevertheless, we talked bravely by the way (though every third sentence on his part was concluded by a "Sir") till we got to that broad part of Parliament-street opposite to the Admiralty and the Horse Guards. Here, however, we met with a rather unseemly interruption, in the form of sundry petitioners; and I shall never forget the air of infantine simplicity with which Hazlitt received and answered them. That I should see anything exceptionable in the acquaintance seemed not to enter his thoughts; but his surprise and horror were extreme at the *breach of etiquette* committed by his unhappy *protégées*, in thus addressing him in the presence of a third person! And this feeling was evidently not on his own account, but on mine. His forbearance and charity for the "unfortunate" persons in question were without limits; and he did not care if all the world knew it, and witnessed the results that ensued whenever his pocket was on a par with his humanity in this particular. But it by no means followed that others might have reached the same philosophic pitch of benevolence: and, with the fewest "prejudices" of any man I

ever knew, Hazlitt was the last to shock those of other people. His consternation on the above occasion was extreme accordingly, and his uneasiness and confusion were in proportion; for he found himself between the horns of a dilemma. He must either run the risk of horrifying *me* by entertaining these not very creditable applicants, or he must outrage *them* by a harsh and unlooked-for repulse. I will not say whether his humanity was stronger than his sense of the *bienséances;* or whether he might not consider the incident as a fairly-earned penalty for the breach of them which *I* had committed, in forcing my company where the desire of companionship was evidently not mutual; not to mention that it might prove a convenient guard against a repetition of the intrusion. Certain it is, that the claimants in question were repulsed with the gentlest hand in the world.

I shall make no apology for relating this incident; for those who feel a sufficient interest in the character of the late William Hazlitt to have accompanied me thus far in my Recollections of him, are not likely to be

troubled with that false delicacy which could alone have induced or demanded the suppression of it.

I shall conclude the record of my first acquaintance with Hazlitt by referring to another incident, still more characteristic than the above, of the mind and character I would help to delineate. I had, as the reader has seen, been the occasion of securing to Hazlitt what he considered and called "the best job" he ever had as a professed author; for, besides the sum he was to receive for the delivery of the course of lectures, he had sold the copyright of them for a handsome price. I had, moreover, not merely kept his lectures from being abused in "Blackwood's," but had praised them there to the full amount of his expectations.* And, to crown the climax of (so-called) obligation, I had, if I remember

* In order to show that Hazlitt was not unreasonable or exigent in his requirements in cases of this nature, I subjoin the note he wrote me on the occasion of my sending him in MS. the article in question:—

"DEAR SIR,—I am very well satisfied with the article, and obliged to you for it. I am afraid the censure is truer than the praise. It will be of great service if they insert it entire, which, however, I hope.

"Your obliged,

"W. HAZLITT."

rightly, at his earnest request, procured the consent of the Committee of Managers to pay him *in advance* the whole or part of the price of his services; a benefit, in his estimation, "worth the other two." Such was the relative state of things between us, when, in an unfortunate article which I wrote in "Blackwood's," I happened to use some phrase or illustration which he (Hazlitt) had used on the same subject just before, in the "London Magazine," and without referring to him as the origin of the joke, or witticism, or whatever it was: for it is not worth the trouble of turning to the passage for verification.

Let the reader judge of my mingled horror and astonishment at finding, in the next number of the "London Magazine," a ferocious personal attack on myself, almost by name, in which my innocent and unconscious adoption of a worthless phrase or word of his was characterised as an atrocious appropriation of his property, and the doer of it written down, in so many words, a "petty-larceny rascal," and threatened with redoubled vengeance in future if he did not leave off his pickpocket proceedings!

Being totally unconscious of any *other* cause

of offence against Hazlitt than the above, I confess that the savage manner in which he made his reprisals both shocked and disgusted me; and so matters rested between us for a considerable length of time, and of course without any thought on my part of the acquaintance being renewed; all the ill that I had heard of Hazlitt being thus confirmed to me by this (as I *then* considered it) atrocious, because wholly unprovoked act.

It is astonishing how quickly a *personal* proof of this kind brings conviction to one's mind on a doubtful point, when nothing else can. I had heard repeated instances of Hazlitt committing unprovoked outrages of this description on his best friends; but knowing and feeling them to be against nature, I would not allow myself to believe them. But the moment he committed one of a similar kind *against myself*, I not merely believed it, but believed all the rest in virtue of it; though it was even more inexplicable, on any received principle of human action, than all the rest, and more against all my previous experience.

I hope the reader anticipates the true ex-

planation in my case, and, through it, in all the rest. The fact is, Hazlitt (as I learned afterwards) believed that I had committed against him what he justly deemed an unpardonable offence. I had, he thought, *cut* him in the street! And whenever anything of this kind happened to him, there was no limit to the "wild kind of justice" which he was disposed to wreak upon the offending party. I do not believe that he could have slept in peace till he had *righted* himself, in any case of this kind; and when the individual was not one against whom he could use his pen, he made his tongue the medium of reprisal.

I do not know how it may have been with Hazlitt's friends in cases similar to that which I have just referred to, or how it might have been with myself had I at that time ranked among them; though I believe that, even in that case, my angry feelings (if I had experienced any) would have arisen solely from his supposing me capable of the unspeakable meanness in question. But merely as an acquaintance, and that acquaintance sought by myself, and almost forced upon

him, I (on receiving the explanation of the act, and believing that he was satisfied as to the alleged cause for it) thought then, and think now, that he had not only a *right* to do what he did, but that there was a kind of magnanimity in flinging aside all the supposed claims of obligation which I have alluded to in the outset of this little history, (and which were no obligations at all, but done purely to please and satisfy *myself*,) and "doing himself a pleasure and a right," out of that pure and irrepressible sense and love of abstract justice which are among the noblest and rarest attributes of the human mind, and were especially conspicuous in his. The "taste" in which the thing was done is another matter, and one which, luckily, Hazlitt cared nothing about; for had he been the man to do so, the world would have been without some of the noblest writings of their class which it can boast.

IV.

DINNER WITH HAZLITT AT JOHN SCOTT'S.—ANECDOTES OF LORD BYRON WHEN AT VIENNA.—HAZLITT'S LONELY HABITS AND CHARACTER.

SHORTLY after the period of my receiving the above explanation of Hazlitt's supposed outrage upon me, I was sitting one morning with the late John Scott, at his lodgings in York Street, Covent Garden, when he told me that he was every moment expecting Hazlitt to call on him by appointment; and knowing my *then* feelings about the attack in the magazine (for it was he who had furnished me with an explanation of it, and from Hazlitt's own lips), he proposed that I should meet him—but not then—for he felt that it would not be *safe* to introduce Hazlitt *unprepared* into the room with a man whom he (Hazlitt) felt that he had outraged. In fact, so intense was Hazlitt's sense of what was due to a man's immediate *personal feelings* when face to face with him, that he would never have forgiven Scott the

indiscretion of bringing himself and me together again, without the full consent of both parties. Briefly, it was settled that we should dine with Scott the same day, if Hazlitt did not object; and accordingly we met as if nothing had happened; for Hazlitt's sensitiveness on matters of this nature precluded the slightest allusion to the indirect occasion of our meeting, nor was it ever afterwards referred to in the most remote manner; and the rest of the day (and night) was spent in talk such as I scarcely remember to have enjoyed either before or since. I never knew Hazlitt so entertaining and brilliant, yet so subtle, penetrating, and profound. He seemed determined to make me amends for the undeserved injury he had done me. It was also, I remember, the first fair renewal of John Scott's intimacy with him, which had been broken off for several years; and they mutually made it the occasion of such a vivid and various calling back of the scenes, characters, and histories of the then, alas! defunct coterie who were accustomed to meet at Basil Montague's, Charles Lamb's, Leigh Hunt's, and all those who had once "called

Admiral Burney friend," that I became as familiar with them all as if I had been one among them—a boon the bestowal of which was like adding a score of years to one's life, "without the illness should attend them." Scott, too, who had recently returned from a lengthened residence in Italy, had many excellent things to tell, which were new to Hazlitt (who was as good a listener as he was a talker); in particular, several capital ones about Lord Byron, with whom he had been recently spending a week at Venice.

Two of these anecdotes I particularly remember. Until their meeting at Venice, there had been an estrangement between Byron and Scott, in consequence of the part the latter had taken in the "Champion," relative to the publication of the celebrated "Farewell;" but they were now reconciled, and were on the water together in Byron's gondola, under circumstances which led Scott to express a strong sense of danger as to their position. "Oh!" said Byron, in a tone of perfect seriousness, "you need not be afraid of anything happening to you while you are with me, *for we are friends now.*" And Scott

explained that Byron had the most intimate persuasion, that any of his friends who had quarrelled with him were never safe from some strange accident, until they had "made it up."

The other anecdote related to one of those *bonnes fortunes* on which Byron so much piqued himself. He told Scott, that during the hey-day of his popularity, he was on a visit at a noble house in the country, where a large party of both sexes was assembled; and that among them was a lady of rank, beauty and immaculate reputation, with whom he fell desperately in love, and determined to urge his passion, notwithstanding the presence of her husband, to whom she was evidently attached. For several days his unwearied assiduities produced no effect beyond that of an evident desire, on the lady's part, to avoid them without infringing the usages of society. Two or three times, during the siege and defence, Byron had taken opportunities of offering the lady a *billet-doux*, in which he had expressed his passion in terms not, as he thought, to be resisted by mortal woman, at least in the class of society in

which this one moved; but on every occasion she had contrived to avoid the proffered insult, without being obliged to recognise it as such. At last, as Byron declared, he grew desperate, and determined to run all risks rather than be foiled in his pursuit. Confident in what he believed to be his knowledge of the female heart, he contrived to be conversing with the lady, in a billiard-room that was situated apart from the rest of the house, at the precise moment when he knew that her husband would enter the room. The husband entered: at *that* moment Byron pressed into her hand his letter; in the alarm and confusion of the moment *she took it*—concealed it hastily—he instantly left her—and (so, at least, Byron declared) the daring *ruse* succeeded! She "deliberated" for an instant whether or not she should denounce to her husband the insulting outrage; and in that instant she was lost!

Such was Byron's account of one of the many love-passages of his strange life. Let those believe it who can.

From this night it was that my *intimacy* with Hazlitt commenced. Henceforward,

with the exception of two or three brief intervals, when either Hazlitt or I was abroad, we met almost daily; and although our intercourse was wholly free from conventional restraint, neither of us ever disguising or concealing an opinion or a sentiment in deference to those of the other, our intimacy was never broken, or even jarred or disturbed, from the above-named period to that of his death—an interval of more than twelve years! This fact may well bear a note of admiration for those who knew the nature of Hazlitt's mind and temperament, and the doubts, suspicions, and misgivings to which they perpetually made him a prey, and the total incapacity that he laboured under, of abstaining from *acting upon* those doubts and suspicions as if they were demonstrated truths.

On the other hand, it is proper for me to caution the reader against supposing that, at any period of our intercourse, anything like a *friendship* subsisted between Hazlitt and myself, in the "sentimental" sense of the phrase. It was a melancholy defect of his mind, that it was wholly incapable of either

exciting or entertaining any such sentiment. I have (with deep reluctance) glanced at one of the *natural* reasons of this sad deficiency. Others of an adventitious character, but more than sufficient to account for it, will develope themselves hereafter. In the meantime, it is no less true than it may seem paradoxical, that, with the most *social* disposition of any man I ever met with, and an active and ever-present sympathy with the claims, the wants, and the feelings of every human being he approached, Hazlitt was, even by nature, but by circumstances still more so, *a lone man*, living, moving, and having his being, for and to himself exclusively; as utterly cut off from fulfilling and exercising the ordinary pursuits and affections of his kind, and of his nature, as if he had been bound hand and foot in a dungeon, or banished to a desert. And so, indeed, he was—bound in the gloomiest of all dungeons—that built for us by our own unbridled passions—banished to that dreariest of all deserts, spread out for us by seared hopes and blighted affections.

We are told that on the summit of one of those columns which form the magnificent

ruins of Hadrian's Temple, in the plain of Athens, there used to dwell a hermit, who never descended from his strangely-chosen abode; owing his scanty food and support to the mingled admiration and curiosity of the peasants who inhabited the plain below. Something like this was the position of William Hazlitt, from the period at which I first became acquainted with him. Self-banished from the social world, no less by the violence of his own passions, than by those petty regards of custom and society which could not or would not tolerate the trifling aberrations from external form and usage engendered by a mind like his; at the same time, those early hopes, born of the French Revolution, which first awakened his soul from its ante-natal sleep, blighted in their very fruition, and the stream that fed them flung back upon its source, to stagnate there, and turn into a poisonous hatred of the supposed causes of their disappointment; his spirit refused to look abroad or be comforted. Such being the melancholy condition of his intellectual being at the period I am speaking of, he became, as regarded himself

personally, heedless of all things but the immediate gratification of his momentary wants or wishes; careless of personal character, indifferent to literary fame, forgetful of the past, reckless of the future; and yet so exquisitely alive to the claims and the virtues of all these, that the abandonment of his birthright in every one of them opened a separate canker in his heart, and made his life a living emblem of that early death which it foretokened.

Thus (like the hermit alluded to above) perpetually surrounded by objects of interest, beauty, and grandeur, and enabled by the elevated position which his noble intellect gave him, to look abroad over them all with the ken of an almost superhuman intelligence, he yet dwelt amidst them all "a man forbid;"—self-exiled from that social intercourse which he was born to brighten and to love; rejected and reviled by his own heart and affections; dreaded, and therefore hated, by his foes; feared, and therefore not loved, even by his (so called) "friends:"—with such a man, so constituted and so circumstanced, there could exist no reciprocity of personal

sentiment, no fair interchange of affection, and, therefore, no true friendship. So that (recurring to the immediate occasion of the foregoing remarks) I repeat, these Recollections must not be received as the blind tribute of an overweening affection, seeking to defend from obloquy a sort of other self; but, as a free-will offering, urged by a sense of justice towards a man whose errors and weakness have been "monstered" into the attributes of a demon; while his many rare and excellent qualities—his noble simplicity of heart and mind—his irrepressible love of truth and justice—and his almost sublime hatred of that oppression and wrong which a systematic violation of those had so long spread abroad over human hopes and institutions throughout the world: all these were overlooked or disregarded, or, when not so, were held up to the world as their direct opposites —as themes for obloquy, rather than claims to admiration.

V.

HAZLITT COMPARED AND CONTRASTED WITH ROUSSEAU. —HIS PERSONAL BEARING AND ITS CAUSES.—HIS INTERCOURSE WITH THE WORLD.—HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

Hazlitt is considered by some of his friends to have had many points of intellectual character and temperament in common with Rousseau. But I do not know how they would set about to make out the resemblance, except in one isolated feature—that of the morbid feeling which possessed Hazlitt as to the sinister effects of his personal appearance and manner, on ordinary observers. Rousseau fancied that his friends were always hatching plots and conspiracies against him: in like manner, Hazlitt fancied that everybody (*except* his friends) who looked upon him, perceived something about him that was strange and *outré*.

There was about as much and as little foundation for the feeling in the one case as the other: it was in fact the result of a con-

sciousness in both that there *was* something within, which each would have desired to conceal. But there was this vital difference between the two, that in the case of Rousseau the weaknesses and errors of which he feared the discovery and promulgation, were such as all men consent to be ashamed of; whereas, in the case of Hazlitt, his extreme sensitiveness pointed at failings that could hurt nobody but himself. Moreover, what *he* chiefly feared from the eyes of the world was, that they should see in him, not himself, but that effigy of him which the inventions of his political and personal enemies had set up; he feared that vulgar eyes would discover in him, not the man he was, but the "pimpled Hazlitt" that his Tory critics had placarded him on every bare wall that knew no better throughout the empire.

There are few things that exercise a more marked and unequivocal influence over the lives and characters of men of great susceptibility of temperament, than any *personal* peculiarity, especially when it is one obvious to all the world: witness the case of Byron, to whose lameness might probably be traced

every one of the leading events and features of his strange and melancholy career. And the same might perhaps be said of Hazlitt, with this aggravating qualification—that in his case the peculiarity was wholly imaginary, except in so far as the imagination, while acting upon his mind, made that into a fact which had else been only a figment of his own brain. If Hazlitt had not in his moody moments fancied himself a mark for vulgar and ignorant wonder "to point the slow unmoving finger at," he might have been living among us now, one of the most delightful ornaments of social life, and the noblest examples of the advancing spirit of his day and country—the pride and pleasure of his friends, and himself the happy witness of the coming on of that glorious dawn of better things which his own writings have materially helped to bring about.

The result of this morbid imagination—this one idea which haunted him like a visible phantom—this falsehood, which, knowing it to be such, he nevertheless palmed off upon himself as a palpable truth, till at last he believed it—the result of this was, that, with

the most social disposition in the world, and with social qualities of unsurpassed amount and value, Hazlitt, during the latter years of his life, lived almost alone in the world—simply because he could not persuade himself to seek that social intercourse which he had lost the power of purchasing at the ordinary price, of complying with all the minutiæ in the received usages of modern life and manners. He felt, in this respect, like a man who is travelling in a strange or savage country, with his pockets full of gold, for which nobody will give him bread in exchange, because his coin has not the conventional stamp of the place, or because the people he has to deal with set no value on anything but those smooth shells and glittering beads with which he has neglected to provide himself.

There can be little doubt that Hazlitt's manner, superinduced upon him by his own morbid mistake as to his personal appearance, had more to do with his peculiar and painful destiny, as regards the private relations of life, than any one but himself would perhaps have been willing to admit. And

therefore it is that it becomes a point worthy of especial notice in these Recollections. Indeed, there probably never occurred a more striking example of the vast influence of external trifles over the moral and intellectual condition of man; nor can I conceive a finer theme for the pen of Hazlitt himself to have descanted upon and illustrated; for he was even more intensely aware of the facts of the case, and of their causes and consequences, than if any one else had been the subject of them. And this knowledge was a perpetual aggravation of the evil, without, on the other hand, contributing in the smallest degree to its cure. It was one of those fatal cases in which the sufferer "weeps the more because he weeps in vain."

Nothing could be more curious, and at times affecting, than to observe (as those who thoroughly knew Hazlitt might often do) the working of these feelings, in his occasional intercourse with society. It might be supposed, perhaps, that the external deference and respect, not to mention the personal homage and admiration, of a man like

Hazlitt, were reserved for the distinguished philosophers, men of science, poets, scholars, and statesmen of the day. Alas! the Chancellor Oxensteirn himself had not a more contemptuous notion of the means and materials it takes to make "a great man," in the estimation of the world (whether of fact or of opinion), which great men are destined to govern. Accordingly, in the presence of these, even the most deservedly celebrated among them, Hazlitt felt himself perfectly at ease and on an equality. But bring him face to face with one of those sleek favourites of fortune who are supposed to find especial favour in fair eyes, or (above all) one of those happily constituted persons who combine the several attributes and peculiarities of manner, look, attire, &c., which go to form the "gentleman" of modern times, and he was like a man awe-struck, and confounded with a sense of his own comparative insignificance.

I remember once gaining his leave to introduce to him a person whose only error in these respects was, that he carried them all to the verge of coxcombry; but who, *en revanche*, had the most earnest and sincere

admiration for Hazlitt, and was, in all other respects, a cultivated and accomplished man. My friend had long solicited me to bring about this meeting; and though, in the early part of my acquaintance with Hazlitt, I had avoided it, as a service of danger to all parties, I soon found that it might be effected, not only without any peril to my friend, but with real gratification to Hazlitt himself, who had the most unmingled admiration for the qualities in question, unimpaired by the slightest touch of envy towards the owner of them.

The meeting took place at Hazlitt's chambers; and after a little of the same sort of blank embarrassment and schoolboy shyness that one may fancy a country recluse might have exhibited on being called upon to sustain a personal interview with George the Fourth, I never knew Hazlitt spend a happier evening, or one more entirely free from those occasional fallings back into his other and less natural self, which were at once the sin and the curse of his social life. With the exception of this one occasion, I do not know that I have ever passed an evening with him,

the intellectual enjoyment of which was not at intervals broken in upon by *looks* passing over his noble countenance, which, where they did not move the observer to terror or wonder, could not fail to excite the deepest pain and pity. But on the evening I am referring to, I particularly remarked that nothing of this kind occurred.

The reason of this, on after reflection, became obvious to me. Our talk was, almost without exception, on the ordinary topics of the passing hour—the public and social events of the day, the theatres, the actors and actresses, our mutual friends (not forgetting their weaknesses), a little "scandal about Queen Elizabeth"—in short, anything and everything but books, book-making, book-learning, and those exclusively *literary* themes which Hazlitt liked less than any others that could be started. The consequence was, that old associations and painful recollections never once came back to him; broken friendships and buried affections found no unoccupied place in his mind on which to cast their shadows; present annoyances were crowded out of doors; fu-

ture contingences were as if they could never happen; and the too often moody, gloomy, constrained, and taciturn recluse, was (to the no small astonishment of my other friend) free and fresh-hearted as a schoolboy among his mates—gay and voluble as a bird in spring—making the room echo with those shouts of laughter, in the thorough heartiness of which no one surpassed him.

The strange and unhappy mistake of Hazlitt, respecting the effect of his manner and bearing on casual observers, was peculiarly active in regard to women; nor could any evidences, however strong and unequivocal (and the reader will see hereafter that such were far from wanting), remove or weaken this feeling, which amounted to nothing short of monomania. In proof of this I could, if the nature of the case permitted, allege numerous instances in which the most indisputable marks of female favour and distinction (whether accorded to his intellectual pretension or not, no matter), were looked upon and resented by him as *personal affronts!* In his numerous "affairs of the heart" (for, like his favourite, John Buncle, he was

always in love with somebody or other), to the fair one's indifference he was indifferent, and continued to love on: if she recognised his homage and was angry at it, he accepted the token as a kind of involuntary compliment; but if she smiled on him, he was confounded and cured! It was clear that she meant, first to entangle, and then to laugh at and insult him!

I may have some singular matter to unfold in connexion with this part of my subject hereafter. In the mean time, the curious reader is growing anxious for the removal of the veil which hides this supposed Mokanna from view. What will he or she say, when, in dropping it, I exhibit a form of excellent symmetry, surmounted by one of the noblest heads and faces that ever symbolled forth a refined, lofty, capacious, and penetrating intellect.

The truth is, that for depth, force, and variety of intellectual expression, a finer head and face than Hazlitt's were never seen. I speak of them when his countenance was not dimmed and obscured by illness, or clouded and deformed by those fearful indications of

internal passion which he never even attempted to conceal. The expression of Hazlitt's face, when anything was said in his presence that seriously offended him, or when any peculiarly painful recollection passed across his mind, was truly awful—more so than can be conceived as within the capacity of the human countenance; except, perhaps, by those who have witnessed Edmund Kean's last scene of *Sir Giles Overreach* from the front of the pit. But when he was in good health, and in a tolerable humour with himself and the world, his face was more truly and entirely answerable to the intellect that spoke through it, than any other I ever saw, either in life or on canvas; and its crowning portion, the brow and forehead, was, to my thinking, quite unequalled, for mingled capacity and beauty.

For those who desire a more particular description, I will add, that Hazlitt's features, though not cast in any received classical mould, were regular in their formation, perfectly consonant with each other, and so finely "chiselled" (as the phrase is), that they produced a much more prominent and striking

effect than their scale of size might have led one to expect. The forehead, as I have hinted, was magnificent; the nose precisely that (combining strength with lightness and elegance) which physiognomists have assigned as evidence of a fine and highly cultivated taste; though there was a peculiar character about the nostrils, like that observable in those of a fiery and unruly horse. The mouth, from its ever-changing form and character, could scarcely be described, except as to its astonishingly varied power of expression, which was equal to, and greatly resembled, that of Edmund Kean. His eyes, I should say, were not good. They were never brilliant, and there was a furtive and at times a sinister look about them, as they glanced suspiciously from under their overhanging brows, that conveyed a very unpleasant impression to those who did not know him. And they were seldom directed frankly and fairly towards you; as if he were afraid that you might read in them what was passing in his mind concerning you. His head was nobly formed and placed; with (until the last few years

of his life) a profusion of coal-black hair, richly curled; and his person was of the middle height, rather slight, but well formed and put together.

Yet all these advantages were worse than thrown away, by the strange and ungainly manner that at times accompanied them. Hazlitt entered a room as if he had been brought back to it in custody; he shuffled sidelong to the nearest chair, sat himself down upon one corner of it, dropped his hat and his eyes upon the floor, and, after having exhausted his stock of conventional small-talk in the words, "It's a fine day" (whether it was so or not), seemed to resign himself moodily to his fate. And if the talk did not take a turn that roused or pleased him, thus he would sit, silent and half-absorbed, for half an hour or half a minute, as the case might be, and then get up suddenly, with a "Well, good morning," shuffle back to the door, and blunder his way out, audibly muttering curses on his folly, for willingly putting himself in the way of becoming the laughing-stock of—the servants! for it was of *that* class and intellec-

tual grade of persons that Hazlitt alone stood in awe. Of the few private houses to which his inclinations ever led him, he perfectly well knew that, even if there had been (which, as we have seen, there was not) anything unusual or *outré* in his appearance, his intellectual pretensions would alone have been thought of. But there was no reaching the drawing-room without running the gauntlet of the servants' hall; and this it was that crushed and confounded him. I am satisfied that Hazlitt never entered a room—scarcely even his own—that he was not writhing under the feelings engendered during his passage to it; and that he never knocked at a door without fearing that it might be opened by a new servant, who would wonder what so "strange" a person could want with their master or mistress.

To those who are not accustomed to the mental vagaries of men of genius, this must seem like a species of insanity. But there would, I think, be no difficulty in accounting for it on perfectly rational principles; at least, I am sure *he* would have found no dif-

ficulty in doing so, even in his own case, much less in that of another person. I shall not myself attempt this explanation; but I will venture to hint at the grounds of it, because they belong to the subject of which I have undertaken to treat. Those grounds are to be sought, as I conceive, first, in that radical defect in Hazlitt's moral conformation, at which I have reluctantly glanced in the outset of these Recollections. Secondly, in that intensely vivid state of excitability in which his intellectual faculties, and especially his imagination, at all times existed, and that consequent intense perception of all things within and about him, which showed him, as with a microscopic eye, a thousand trifles that were invisible to ordinary observation. Thirdly, that oppressive and overweening self-consciousness which, as it were, projected the shadows and lights of his own mind upon all things on which he looked, and caused external objects to reflect back to him his own thoughts and sensations, as if they were bodily images; thus creating an intellectual world which blended itself with the physical one, and prevented him from being wholly pre-

sent in or occupied with either. Lastly, that despairing abandonment of all attempt at self-control, which (being fully and intensely conscious of it) made him stand in perpetual dread of himself,—uncertain that, from moment to moment, he might not be tempted to commit some incredible outrage against those rules and usages of civilized life, which, nevertheless, he was the last person in the world to hold in contempt.

The reader will, I hope, not suppose that I offer the above as anything more than the *materials* for an explanation of one of the most curious and interesting phenomena that ever arose out of the condition and operations of the human mind. The explanation itself might (as I have hinted) have formed an admirable theme for Hazlitt's own pen; but I scarcely think there is another left among us capable of handling it to any satisfactory result. For myself, I will not venture to pursue it further. But I will say, that, however the weakness in question used to pain and even shock me, I never felt the least surprise at it. On the contrary, it always struck me as a natural and intelligible commentary on

the peculiar mental condition from which it sprang—a sort of physiognomical expression, as easy to be interpreted as those of the face itself: the only singularity of the case being, that whereas most other men are able to conceal all external evidences of what is passing or has passed in their minds except those which are written on their faces, Hazlitt was "all face."

VI.

HAZLITT AT HOME.—HIS EVERLASTING TEA.—HIS SUPPERS AND TABLE-TALK AT THE SOUTHAMPTON.

HAZLITT's way of life was as little adapted to the ordinary course of things in a "regular" family, as can well be conceived. He always lived (during the period of my intimacy with him) in furnished lodgings, and those of a very secondary class;—the latter not from any lack of means, for he had only to take his pen in hand to, as it were, coin money; still less was it from any parsimonious feeling, for he was profuse in his expenditure, so far as related to the personal comforts of himself and those dependent on him. But, on adopting this mode of life, he fancied that his peculiar habits would have subjected him to perpetual inconveniences and affronts, except from those to whom the moderate stipend he paid was a material object. But he was far from escaping them by this expedient, of descending in the scale of social order; for the lower

you descend in that scale, the less toleration there is for anything that does not precisely conform to the preconceived notions of the observer. In fact, this was one of the great mistakes that he made in "the act and practique part of life;" and it was the source of much bitterness and misery to him; for, strange as it may seem in such a man, it was not from the flow and current of his own thoughts, feelings, and reflections, that his daily life took its tone and colour, but from the petty events and outward accidents of the hour. And above all, it was on the personal civility and respect of those about him, that his very existence seemed to hang. Now, by keeping himself among a class of persons, to a certain degree removed from the mere vulgar, his name and pursuits would have secured him from personal disrespect, if they did not procure him the opposite; whereas, in descending two or three steps lower in the scale, the effect of his intellectual pretensions was not merely nullified, but turned against him. In the former case, the gazers at the celebrated author did but "wonder with a foolish face of praise;" but

in the latter, they shrunk from him, as if he was a wizard, or stared at him as at a wild beast. And we are sadly too apt to become what people believe us, rather than what we seek and desire to be.

Hazlitt usually rose at from one to two o'clock in the day—scarcely ever before twelve; and if he had no work in hand, he would sit over his breakfast (of excessively strong black tea, and a toasted French roll) till four or five in the afternoon—silent, motionless, and self-absorbed, as a Turk over his opium pouch; for tea served him precisely in this capacity. It was the only stimulant he ever took, and at the same time the only luxury; the delicate state of his digestive organs prevented him from tasting any fermented liquors, or touching any food but beef and mutton, or poultry and game, dressed with perfect plainness. He never touched any but *black* tea, and was very particular about the quality of that, always using the most expensive that could be got: and he used, when living alone, to consume nearly a pound in a week. A cup of Hazlitt's tea (if you happened to come in for the first

brewage of it) was a peculiar thing; I have never tasted anything like it. He always made it himself; half-filling the teapot with tea, pouring the boiling water on it, and then almost immediately pouring it out; using with it a great quantity of sugar and cream.

To judge from its occasional effect upon myself, I should say that the quantity Hazlitt drank of this tea produced, ultimately, a most injurious effect upon him; and in all probability hastened his death—which took place from disease of the digestive organs. But its *immediate* effect was agreeable, even to a degree of fascination; and not feeling any subsequent reaction from it, he persevered in its use to the last, notwithstanding two or three attacks, similar to that which terminated his life.

To the very few who felt a real and deep interest in this extraordinary man, and to whom it was evident that his restless and resistless passions, and his entire, and even wilful, subjection to them—added to other points, to be hereafter referred to, in his moral and physical constitution—made him one of the most wretched of human beings,

it was no less curious than pleasing to see him luxuriating over his beloved tea, in a state of deep and still repose, that nothing could disturb—not even the intrusion of a mere acquaintance or a dun—events that, at other times, were but too apt to move him from his propriety.

For the last four or five years of his life, Hazlitt never touched any other liquid but tea. During the previous four or five years, he used to drink large quantities of cold water. I have frequently seen him take three or four quarts while sitting after supper—which was his favourite meal. Wine, and all fermented liquors, he had forsworn before I knew him; and he religiously kept to his resolution. *This*, he used to say, was the reason why Blackwood's people called him "*pimpled* Hazlitt"—thus holding him up to the world as a dram-drinker!* Had they

* Lord Byron took this imputation for granted, and discovered that the epithet "pimpled" might also be applied to his writings! And so it might with about equal fitness: for, as his face was as clear and pale as marble, so was his style the most simple and transparent of the day. Sir Bulwer Lytton, in his admirable work on "England and the English," has inadvertently adopted the invention as if it were an unquestioned fact, merely

told nothing but the truth of him, they would not have made him out to the world as anything worse than he really was; and he did not desire to pass for anything better. Whereas, by ascribing to him precisely *that* vice which was the farthest removed from his actual habits, they gained a great point against him. "Had I really been a gin-drinker and a sot," I have heard him say, "they would have sworn I was a milk-sop."

His breakfast and tea were frequently the only meals that Hazlitt took till late at night, when he usually ate a hearty supper of hot meat—either rump-steak, poultry, or game—a partridge or a pheasant. This he invariably took at a tavern—his other meals (except his dinner sometimes) being as invariably taken at home.

There were three or four houses only that

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disputing the utility of alleging it. "What purpose," he asks, "salutary to literature, is served by hearing that Hazlitt had pimples on his face?" But he had no such thing! "Throw dirt enough, and some of it will stick." That was the axiom on which Hazlitt's enemies proceeded; and there is no denying that, in his case, it succeeded to a miracle. Times are changed since, and the "dirt," when flung, sticks only to the fingers of the flinger.

he frequented; for he never entered the doors of any one where his ways were not well known, or where there was any chance of his *bill* being asked for till he chose to offer payment of it. And when treated in a way that pleased him in this latter particular, he did not care what he paid. I have known him pay with cheerfulness accumulated sums of twenty or thirty pounds for suppers only or chiefly.

The houses Hazlitt frequented were the Southampton Coffee-house, in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane; Munday's, in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, and (for a short period) the Spring Garden Coffee-house. The first of these he has immortalised, in one of the most amusing of his Essays, "On Coffee-house Politicians." Here, for several years, he used to hold a sort of evening levee, where, after a certain hour at night (and till a very *un*certain hour in the morning) he was always to be found, and always more or less ready to take part in that sort of desultory "talk" (the only thing really deserving the name of "conversation") in which he excelled every man I have ever met with. But of

this hereafter. Here, however, in that little bare and comfortless coffee-room,* have I scores of times seen the daylight peep through the crevices of the window-shutters upon "Table-Talk" that was worthy an intellectual feast of the Gods.

When Hazlitt dined at all—which was often not more than two or three times a week—this meal seemed only a sort of preliminary to his everlasting Tea, for which he returned home as soon as he had dined, and usually sat over it for a couple of hours. Afterwards he almost invariably passed two or three hours at one or other of the large theatres, placing himself as invariably in a back corner seat of the second tier of boxes, and, if possible, shrouding himself from view, as if he felt himself "a weed that had no business there," in such a scene of light, gaiety, and artificial seeming.

To the play itself, on these occasions, he

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* No longer so now, I am sorry to add. It has recently been renovated and "improved" out of all agreeable associations and recollections; and, like the Mitre, Wills's, Tom's, &c., there is nothing left of "the old familiar" spot but its name.

paid scarcely any attention, even when he went there in his critical capacity as a writer for the public journals; for, notwithstanding the masterly truth and force of most of his decisions on plays and actors, I will venture to say, that in almost every case, except those of his two favourites, Kean and Liston, they might be described as the result of a few hasty glances and a few half-heard phrases. From these he drew instant deductions that it took others hours of observation to reach, and as many more of labour to work out. In this respect his faculty was, I imagine, never before equalled or even approached; and his consciousness of, and confidence in it, led him into a few ridiculous blunders. Still, upon the whole, he was doubtless right in trusting to these brief oracles and broken revelations, rather than pursuing them to their ultimate sources—as most others must do if they would hope to expound them truly and intelligibly: for his was a mind that would either take its own course or none; it was not to be "constrained by mastery" of rule or discipline. It was a knowledge of this truth, and his habit of acting on it, which constituted the secret of his success as a writer.

VII.

HAZLITT IN SOCIETY. — HIS MORBID FEELINGS ON POLITICAL TOPICS.—HIS WORSHIP OF NAPOLEON, AS THE DESTROYER OF THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS.

THOUGH no one could possess a more social turn of mind than Hazlitt did under ordinary circumstances,I never met with any other man who so little needed society. If ever there was a mind "sufficient to itself," it was that of Hazlitt; and I believe that, bodily health and the appliances and means of personal comfort being supposed, he could have passed his life alone on a desert island, with perfect satisfaction, and even with high and constant intellectual enjoyment; for with him thought and contemplation were ends in themselves, not merely means to some end disjoined from them; or, at all events, they were means to the attainment of that TRUTH which was, in itself, the great and all-sufficing end of his intellectual being.

What is understood by "society" in its ordinary sense, Hazlitt shunned altogether;

and, above all, that "literary" society in which his admirable powers of conversation qualified him to shine so conspicuously. He had enough of books and criticism and philosophy in the way of his profession; it was the *business* of his life to "coin his brain for drachmas;" the *pleasures* of it he wisely sought from other sources, and chiefly from calling back the feelings and recollections of the Past; for it is, I think, remarkable that, though Hazlitt's views and sentiments respecting mankind were "as broad and general as the casing air," he never, or very rarely, employed his thoughts upon the Future.

The reason, I believe, was, that he could not do so without including *politics* in his speculations; and this was an almost interdicted subject with him; it was touching upon a string that "echoed to the seat where *hate* is throned." Politics offered the one point which acted on his temper like monomania. It was capable of changing him from a reasonable being into a wild beast. It stirred up the bitter and rancorous feelings that, to the very last, lay festering in his

heart, and eating into its core like some "poisonous mineral"—deposited there by the events that had terminated the French Revolution; and those feelings were still more firmly rooted by the subsequent downfal of his idol, Napoleon, and the restoration of the Bourbons. I have heard those who knew him in his early youth say, that it was the great events of the French Revolution, and the new era of thought and of things that they seemed to create throughout Europe, which first called forth Hazlitt's intellectual faculties from that dreamy torpor in which they might otherwise have lain for years longer, perhaps for ever. His early metaphysical work, and many remarkable features of his after character, show us that those events found his heart filled with all tender and kindly affections towards his fellow-beings, and all high and happy hopes and aspirations as to their ultimate destiny. What those events, or rather their immediate sequents, *left* that heart, those only can know who had for years studied it as "a book where men might read strange matters." In brief, those events found his bosom the birth-place

of universal Love; they left it "the very heart and throne of tyrannous Hate."

I shall have more to say on this part of my subject hereafter. At present I glance at it incidentally, because it is the pivot on which moves the whole character of Hazlitt's actual life and destiny. Had his faculties and sensibilities opened and developed themselves at any other period, or under any other political aspect, than that of the first French Revolution, he might have been the very model of a wise and happy man. But as it was, his whole intellectual being—his temper, affections, passions, meditations, and pursuits —took a sinister turn from those events, which never afterwards left it, or at least which was never afterwards absent when its first exciting cause was recalled into action. On all matters but political ones Hazlitt's perceptions were almost super-humanly clear and acute, and his judgment was infallible. But about the political prospects, tendencies, and events of the day, he was like a child or a woman—either utterly indifferent to them, or, when not so, regarding them in a light directly opposed to the true one.

I will give one or two remarkable instances of what I mean. The downfal of Napoleon, and the restoration of the Bourbons—which every man of ordinary political sagacity and foresight must have looked upon as the certain coming on of that natural supremacy of the MANY over the FEW, of which the first French Revolution did but furnish the rude foretaste and barbarous ante-type—Hazlitt regarded as the final consummation of the triumph of "Legitimacy" and "Divine Right," and the utter extinction of human liberty from the earth. The writings and principles of Bentham and his friends and followers, which have already gone far towards creating a new era in human society, he looked upon and treated with utter and unmingled contempt. And as to the aristocracy of England, or of any other country, coming to feel and admit even the political expediency, much less the natural justice, of Reform and social regeneration—he would as soon have looked for the Millennium.

The truth is, that many—perhaps it may be said most—of the commanding and first-rate intellects that have been among us, have

not been so much in actual advance of their age as others of an inferior grade and a different temperament. It has seemed to be sufficient for them to *produce* the momentum, of which others could better feel, direct, and see the results. It was so with Bacon. We have no evidence that he anticipated the vast consequences to which his principles of philosophising have led, and the still more vast ones to which they are now leading. Like Hazlitt in regard to morals, he was no "perfectibility" man, in respect of science and knowledge: and to anticipate *that* in the possible existence of which we have no faith, is a moral contradiction. Though Hazlitt would readily have admitted that the world has never been in the same moral or intellectual condition for any two centuries together, and that every nation has, from time to time, differed as much from itself as it has at all times differed from all others, yet he laughed at those who predicated for the future anything very different from that which has existed in the past. He sighed and wept over what he considered as the wreck of human liberty, its hopes, tendencies, and conse-

quences, as he might be supposed to have done over a mortal bride and her offspring; seeming to forget that principles are imperishable, that truth and justice are unchangeable and immortal; and, what is still more to the purpose, that the human mind has a natural and necessary sympathy with these, and a craving after them, which have the strength and the permanence of instincts, and therefore cannot be wholly eradicated or suppressed.

But Hazlitt's want of hope in the future condition of his fellow-beings was more a personal than an intellectual failing; a thing arising more from his own individual circumstances and feelings than from the convictions or calculations of his understanding. He was a disappointed man; and despondency was a disease, not a natural quality, of his mind. He had nothing in after-life to look forward to for himself, and he had nothing to satisfy him in the present. The past was his only refuge; and even there he found little that was personally gratifying to him—much that was deeply painful and disappointing, no less to his hopes than to his

actual experience. And a man so placed is not likely to see too much good in prospect for his fellow-creatures; for even the least desponding among us are but too apt to "lay the flattering unction to our souls" (for such it is) that misery is the destined lot of human nature. That we do so is at once the curse and the crime of that nature; because (like jealousy) it makes the misery on which it feeds. Hope is more than a blessing—it is a duty and a virtue; and in its absence we not only cannot accomplish the destiny that awaits us—we do not merit that destiny, and therefore shrink from admitting its existence, or even its possibility.

VIII.

HAZLITT'S FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCE.—THE MONTAGUES, HUMES, LEIGH HUNT, NORTHCOTE, &c.

I CAN call to mind only one person for whom Hazlitt seemed habitually to entertain a sentiment of personal kindness and esteem, and one only (among his contemporaries) for whose intellectual powers he felt and uniformly expressed a general deference and respect. The first of these was Charles Lamb, the second was Coleridge.

Hazlitt went about (Diogenes-like) looking, by the light of his acute and searching intellect, for a man made by Nature in her happiest and simplest mould, and not afterwards marred and curtailed of his fair proportions, on the Procrustes bed of custom and society. He believed that there might be such a man, because he felt that he himself retained much of the character, though blended with more that deformed and defaced it. He sought such a man through the world—he sought

him in books—he sought him in the ideal places of his own imagination; but he found him in Charles Lamb alone. He found there all his own exquisite sensibilities—all his own simplicity and sincerity of heart—his uncompromising directness and singleness of spirit—his large and liberal sympathies with his kind—together with all his own profound sagacity of intellect and boundless range of thought. He also found there *that* in the absence of which he would scarcely have persuaded himself to believe that the other qualities which he sought could exist: I mean, many of his own intellectual weaknesses and deficiencies; much of that restless and impatient yearning after good, which is the necessary consequence of perceiving without the power of compassing it; not a little of that wilful mistaking of good for evil, and of evil for good, which is the universal concomitant of such a condition of mind; and not a few of those *crotchets* of the brain and heart that were never yet absent from *such* a brain and heart, when placed in the social circumstances which had accompanied Lamb and Hazlitt through life. Hazlitt

found all these in Charles Lamb; and he found them almost wholly uncontaminated by that "baser matter" with which he felt them to be so inextricably blended in his own nature, and from which he had never found them dissevered in any other.

Moreover, from Lamb, and from Lamb alone, among all his friends and associates, Hazlitt had never received, or even suspected, except on one occasion, any of those personal slights and marks of disrespect which he did not feel or fear the less because he was conscious of often deserving them—using the phrase in its ordinary and social acceptation. From Lamb alone, his errors, extravagancies, and inconsistencies, met with that wise and just consideration which his fine sense of the weakness no less than the strength of our human nature dictated. There was no one who spoke more *freely* of Hazlitt, whether behind his back or before his face, than Lamb did; but Lamb never spoke *disparagingly* of him. Lamb, in canvassing the faults of his character, never failed to bear in mind, and call to mind in others, the rare and admirable qualities by which they were accompanied,

and with which, it may be, they were naturally and therefore inextricably linked.

No wonder, then, that Hazlitt felt towards Lamb a sentiment of personal kindness and esteem that was not extended, even in kind, to any other individual.*

There was but one house to which Hazlitt seemed to go, or to contemplate going (which with him answered almost the same purpose) with unalloyed pleasure; and that was Charles Lamb's. Almost the only other houses to which he ever thought of going, after my acquaintance with him, were the late Mr. Basil Montague's, in Bedford Square, the late Mr. Hume's, at Notting Hill, Mr. Northcote's, Mr. Leigh Hunt's, and my own. To

* I have sometimes felt that I might fairly extend this exception to myself. But I have as often been prevented from doing so by the consideration, that, in order to the existence of the sentiment in question, it was necessary, in this particular instance, that the party feeling it should entertain an admiration for the intellectual powers and pretensions of the object of it, little, if at all short of that which was due to his own. And in my case there was too little ground for this to induce me fairly to persuade myself that he felt more esteem for me than he did for the rest of his friends.

the first of these he continued to go, partly on account of early associations, and in compliance with feelings which had been created by many acts of kindness. But he seemed to go in fear and trembling, and never without an even chance of coming away raging or sulking like a madman or a wild beast. There was a new footman, perhaps, who, not knowing him, would leave him "kicking his heels" in the hall, while he went to ascertain whether so "strange" looking a person could be admissible to the drawing-room! And when anything of this sort happened, Hazlitt was upset for the evening; he was dumfounded, and would sit sulking and scowling silently for a quarter of an hour or so, and then get up and go away, to vent his rage in the open air; or if he stayed, it was perhaps from sheer dread of having to repass the ordeal of the ceremonious bell-ringing and the supercilious lacquey that preceded his exit.

In fact, Hazlitt never felt himself at ease for a moment, where the outward observances proper to a certain class of life were strictly

maintained by those about him—much less when they were expected from himself. Not that he overlooked or desired to depreciate their value and convenience; on the contrary, they were, perhaps, never more justly, and therefore highly estimated by any one. But it did not follow that he could himself conform to them; and the impossibility of his doing so was the very cause of the anger and uneasiness he felt whenever he found himself in the way of failing in it. The origin of this incapacity, and of its sad results as regarded his personal comfort, would form a curious and interesting subject of inquiry, in connexion with Hazlitt's intellectual character; and, in fathoming it, the most recondite features of that character would develope themselves. But I must not venture to open the inquiry here. I must only observe that none but the peculiar circumstances connected with his visits to the house in question, could have induced Hazlitt to overcome the extreme repugnance he felt at placing himself within the observation of *any* individuals, whether of the meanest or the most exalted class, who were likely to look upon and treat him according to his

outward seeming. Nothing but the pleasure he took in looking at the "coronet face" (as he has called it) of Mrs. M., and the Psyche-like form and features of her daughter, and listening to the accomplished talk of the one, and the quick wit and piquant satire of the other, could have induced Hazlitt to undergo the ordeal of being formally ushered into and out of a suite of spacious and well-appointed drawing-rooms, by a liveried lacquey who was all the while (so at least Hazlitt persuaded himself)

"Wondering how the devil he got there."

There were other circumstances, too, which had, during the last three or four years of his life, prevented him from keeping up his former intercourse with the enlightened and accomplished family I have referred to above. He had, in his growing irritability, and the recklessness of consequences which attended it, and under the influence of those unworthy suspicions which always beset him when in that state of mind, committed some unpardonable outrages on one or more of the individual members of that family, in the form of offensive personal references to them

in his writings; at the same time adding to the outrage by everywhere pointing it out to the attention of those who might otherwise have passed it over unnoticed; for his misdeeds of this kind were of so vague, and often so utterly inapplicable a character, that nothing but his own voluntary confession of them could have fixed them upon him. And this self-accusation he never failed to furnish, and often (I am satisfied) from pure regret and remorse at the outrage and injustice he had committed. But the effect of it was ruinous to him nevertheless, and had latterly cut him off from almost all social intercourse, but that which was indispensable to the supply of his daily wants.

It is due to Hazlitt's memory, that I here mention his repeated expressions of a regret, almost amounting to a remorse, at one in particular of those insane outrages which he had, in a moment of ungovernable anger, been induced to commit, on the chief member of the family I have now referred to; a man to whom he was indebted for many acts of substantial kindness and service, and (what Hazlitt was still more grateful for) that

uniform evidence of personal esteem and consideration, which showed itself in outward civility and respect.

To Mr. Hume's, at Notting Hill, Hazlitt was now and then attracted by the cordial welcome he was sure to receive there, not merely from the "*one* fair daughter" of the worthy host, but from the half dozen, who were just sufficiently tinged with the literary hue to be aware of his pretensions. But an expedition of this kind was always a service of danger with Hazlitt; and he knew it to be so, and shrunk from it accordingly; for such was his John Buncle-like susceptibility, touching the merits and virtues of any unmarried lady between the ages of fifteen and fifty, who might chance to smile upon him, that even while despairing over the loss of one idol, he was always prepared, at a moment's notice, to cast himself at the feet of another.

To Mr. Northcote's, Hazlitt went frequently, and stayed long; at one time more frequently than to any other place. But his visits to Northcote were in some sort professional: and whatever he did with

a view to business, or to any after consideration whatsoever—anything which did not immediately arise out of the impulse directing it—he did reluctantly and with an ill grace. I have several times been present when Hazlitt has been at Northcote's, and has taken part in those admirable Conversations with the venerable artist, in which he (Hazlitt) professed that he used to take such delight.. But I never saw him for a moment at ease there, or anything like himself—that self which he was when sitting in his favourite corner at the Southampton, or by Lamb's or my fireside, or (above all) his own. I do not mean to say, that in what he has written on this subject, he has in the smallest degree exaggerated his impressions of the intellectual qualities of Northcote, or the charm of his conversation. But these were not the things on which Hazlitt's personal ease and comfort depended in his intercourse with others. There were points in Northcote's character, for which Hazlitt felt the greatest dislike. But what was of much more consequence to the mutual comfort of their intercourse, he knew perfectly well that Northcote often

dreaded, and therefore hated him; and, when this feeling was acting, only tolerated his presence, and talked to him the more entertainingly, on that very account. I speak of the period subsequent to Hazlitt's occasional publication, in the "New Monthly Magazine," of portions of his Conversations with Northcote, under the title of "Boswell Redivivus."

Hazlitt's mode of turning Northcote's conversation to a *business* account, while the "Boswell Redivivus" was appearing in the "New Monthly Magazine," was sufficiently curious and characteristic. He used it more as a stimulus to his own powers than in any other character, at least as related to opinions and sentiments; for, in reporting the curious facts and personal anecdotes related to him by Northcote, he was (as I have said elsewhere) correct, even to a literal setting down of N.'s very words. When the time was at hand for preparing a number of the papers, he used to ask me, "Have you seen Northcote lately? Is he in talking cue? for I must go in a day or two, and get an article out of him." And, if you happened to meet him anywhere on

the evening of the day on which he had paid one of these visits of business, he was sure to be unusually entertaining. He would relate every word that had passed on any noticeable topic; and almost any topic, however dry or common-place or exhausted, was sure to furnish forth something novel and curious when he and Northcote got together.

The simple truth on this matter is, that it was the astonishing acuteness and sagacity of Hazlitt's remarks that called into active being, if they did not actually create, much of what was noticeable in Northcote's conversation. Almost everything that he said in the way of critical opinion, on any topic that might be in question, was at least *suggested* by something which Hazlitt would either drop in furtively as the point arose, with a humble and deprecatory "But don't you think, sir"—or it was superadded to some inconsequent or questionable observation of Northcote's, with an assenting "Yes, sir; and perhaps—" adding the true statement of the case, whatever it might be. And with these intellectual promptings, the truth

and acuteness of which Northcote perceived and caught up immediately, he would go on talking "like a book" (as Hazlitt used to describe it), for half an hour together; and Hazlitt would sit listening in silent admiration, like a loving pupil, to the precepts of his revered master—he the pupil, being all the while capable of teaching or confounding the master, on almost every point of inquiry that could by possibility come into discussion between them.

The overstrained admiration which Hazlitt felt and expressed for the conversational powers of Northcote, has always seemed to me one of the most curious points in the personal history of distinguished men; and I could never satisfactorily account for it, until now that I have set myself to recollect in detail the peculiar circumstances under which the conversations between these two remarkable men took place. But now I seem to see the explanation of it very clearly. Northcote, by having preserved his intellectual faculties in all their freshness up to the very great age at which Hazlitt first became acquainted with him, and those faculties

having always included an unusual justness of tact in observing the ordinary circumstances to which the daily occurrences of life directed them, had acquired a vast superiority over Hazlitt in his actual personal knowledge of society, and its visible and superficial results on individual men. He had also an inexhaustible fund of curious facts stored in his memory, in relation to a great number of persons about whom Hazlitt felt a degree of interest and curiosity which he was wholly incapable of entertaining towards *living* persons, however distinguished. About Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua, Burke, Goldsmith, and the whole of that coterie of distinguished men of the last age, Northcote had things to tell that would have furnished forth half a dozen "Boswells Redivivus," in a much more apt sense of the phrase than that in which Hazlitt used it; and he told them with a degree of tact, spirit, and dramatic effect, that has never been surpassed, if equalled, in any published detail of these true gems of literary and personal history.

It was this which first attracted Hazlitt's

attention towards Northcote, and excited that interest in everything he said, which Hazlitt never felt towards any other individual. He looked upon Northcote as a connecting link —the only existing one that he knew of— between the last age and the present, and attached to him a portion of that (so to speak) traditional respect and deference which he could never persuade himself to feel for any contemporary, however distinguished, or withhold from any to whom posterity had agreed to award them.

Another house to which Hazlitt sometimes went, but with a degree of reluctance for which it would be difficult to account, considering the partiality and personal interest which attracted him there, was that of Mr. Leigh Hunt. And these opposing influences (whatever they were) were so nearly balanced that I have often known him "of twenty minds," as the phrase is, whether he would go or not, for hours together, and not able to settle the question at last, until it was settled by the acquiescence or refusal of somebody else to go with him. Indeed this *vis inertiæ* was so strong in Hazlitt that, frequently, nothing

but the actual and near prospect of absolute destitution could induce him to set about writing—except in the case of his having some subject in his head on which he desired to write, for the mere pleasure of expressing his sentiments and opinions on it: for in all other cases, the excitement derived from the mere distinction and profit of his writings was fully counterbalanced by the habitually contemplative turn of his mind, as opposed to its *active* qualities, and by his utter indifference to popular opinion or applause, except in so far as he felt these to be important to his immediate success as a writer by profession. No wonder then that the quality of mind I am alluding to should overcome the impulses of a mere passing inclination or a pleasant association.

There was no man of whose social qualities Hazlitt thought so highly as he did of Leigh Hunt's; and no one with whom he had connected more pleasant associations, arising out of the earlier and happier part of his intellectual life. In fact, there was no man to whom Hazlitt felt himself more *attracted*, actively speaking, than towards Leigh Hunt

—no one in whose society he enjoyed more of the double pleasure arising from receiving and communicating intellectual excitement. Yet the impulse to seek that pleasure where alone it was to be found, in the instance in question, was never strong enough to overcome the negative disposition to stay where he was, wherever that might be, added to the mere imagination of the repelling force that might possibly have met him in the quarter whence the attractive one was also acting.

The truth I believe to be, that Hazlitt literally never quitted the chair on which he placed himself when he rose in the morning, and, but for the absolute necessity of providing for the physical wants of his nature by his own exertions, never *would* have quitted it, in search of any social intercourse or excitement whatever,—unless moved to do so by some inducement in which *female* attraction had a chief share. When alone with his own thoughts—and I judge from having repeatedly and purposely suffered him to remain alone with them for hours together, when I have been sitting with him after

some long and exciting batch of talk—when thus alone, I say, he would sometimes subside into an entire self-absorption, an utter abstraction from all but his own thoughts —or more probably into that vague, dreamy, and mysterious state of intellectual existence, half repose, half enjoyment, which follows high intellectual excitement of any kind in which the pleasurable has predominated—a calm, so pure and serene, that it seemed like a sin to call him from it to that actual reality which had, for him, so little to compensate for the change.

The only other house which Hazlitt visited, which I can speak of from actual observation, was my own; and to that, if I am entitled to judge at all, and may be supposed to have the materials for judging in an uninterrupted intercourse of fourteen years, I should say that he came in less fear of having to regret that he had come (for he never went anywhere without *some* fear of this kind), stayed with more unmingled comfort and satisfaction, and went away in a better humour with himself and the world, than he did in any other case whatever. And

the reasons for this were simple and obvious, and of such a nature that they may be stated without the risk of their being supposed to include any invidious comparisons as to the feelings and conduct of other people in their intercourse with this extraordinary man—who assuredly brought upon himself all the ills that he was compelled to endure in his intercourse with others, and perhaps (in the ordinary sense of the word) *deserved* them all. That I, and those belonging to me, did not think so—in other words, that we honoured, admired, and loved the nobler and finer parts of his character, and therefore could not hate or despise the weaker ones with which they were inextricably mingled, affords the simple explanation of the fact I have stated, if I may believe it to be one. We saw in William Hazlitt as noble a nature as any with which even books had made us acquainted, and of which, in actual experience, we saw few, if any other examples. And because the beautiful qualities of his mind and heart (which we scarcely saw anywhere else) were allied with a few of those deteriorating and debasing weaknesses which constitute the sum and

substance of most *other* hearts and minds, we saw the owners of these latter think, and speak of, and treat him, as if *he* were of unmixed baseness, and *they* were immaculate! Because, when angered in his personal feelings, or outraged in his sense of right and justice, he spoke, or wrote, or acted under the natural impulse thus created, instead of cunningly waiting till his actual feelings were cooled or passed away, and his sense of personal wrong forgotten, and *then* speaking, or writing, or acting, so as to reconcile a rankling desire for petty revenge with a due consideration for worldly interest, as is the wont of nine-tenths of the world—because of *this*, we heard him spoken of, and saw him treated, as one not fit to form a part of human society. Because, with a finer sense of the graces and elegancies of personal manner and appearance, and a juster estimation of the virtue and value of these, than almost any other man living, and a knowledge of their causes, sources, and results, that would have put to shame the tact and teaching of the most accomplished of May Fair Exclusives, he was, in his own person, awkward, embarrassed, and strange, to a degree that,

if represented on the stage, would have been deemed a clever caricature of those qualities —because of these deficiencies (which arose in a great measure from his exquisite sense of their opposites, and the high but just value which he placed on them in a social point of view), we saw him treated as a low-bred, vulgar cockney, or a savage and saturnine recluse. Because he was (with perhaps no exception whatever, among men of first-rate talent at the time I speak of) the only man who dared to hold by and express in plain and uncompromising terms those political sentiments and opinions which, at the early part of the first French Revolution, he had adopted in common with almost all the intellectual men of the day, his friends, teachers, and seniors—the Wordsworths, Coleridges, Southeys, &c.; because, holding by these opinions to the last, in spite of their ill success and the politic putting of them off by those who helped to instil them into him, he dared to express them in terms, if stronger, yet not more violent than those in which half the world expresses them now that they can keep each other in countenance; because of this, we saw him put out of the pale of critical

and social courtesy, denounced as an outlaw, not entitled to the usages of civilised warfare, and only to be hunted down as a savage or a wild beast.

In pursuance of this latter plan, for instance, precisely *because* he was the most original thinker of his day, we heard him held up as a mere waiter upon the intellectual wealth of his literary acquaintance—a mere sucker of the brains of Charles Lamb and Coleridge. Precisely *because* his face was as pale and clear as marble, we saw him pointed at as the "pimpled Hazlitt." Precisely *because* he never tasted anything but water, we saw him held up as an habitual gin-drinker and a sot!

Not to multiply instances of this treatment of Hazlitt, we saw further, what is perhaps more to the point than all else,—that these things, instead of passing by him unregarded or unnoticed (as they would have done by many) were daily and hourly acting with the most deadly effect, not merely on his feelings and habits, but on his personal character, half making him the monster that they represented him.

We saw these things in regard to Hazlitt;

we saw and felt the miserable mischiefs they were working in his mind and temper; the intellectual martyrdom he was suffering from them, but with anything but a martyr's patience; and we sought, not to compensate him for the injustice he was receiving elsewhere, but merely to avoid adding to the weight of that injustice, by uniformly treating him in a manner to make it impossible for him to even suspect that our feelings in regard to him were, in the smallest degree, affected by the treatment he was constantly receiving in certain quarters.

Not indeed that he feared any such effect among the *male* literary friends with whom he associated; nor would he have cared much, even had he seen cause for such fear among *them*. But he scarcely believed it possible that women could fail to be influenced by the purely personal attacks that were made on him. And the consequence was that for days, and even weeks after the appearance of any of these pretended criticisms on the writings that he was so frequently putting forth at the time I speak of, he scarcely dared to go near any one of even his most favourite resorts, lest he should see, or fancy that he

saw, "Quarterly Review," or "Blackwood's Magazine," written on the very face on which he went to gaze in silent or in eloquent admiration.

Nay, he carried his dread of the supposed personal and private results of these attacks to a pitch that, while it lasted, amounted to a sort of monomania,—many of the effects of which would have been perfectly ludicrous, had they not been so painfully the opposite to the object of them. For instance, —during the first week or fortnight after the appearance of (let us suppose) one of "Blackwood's" articles about him, if he entered a coffee-house where he was known, to get his dinner, it was impossible (he thought) that the waiters could be doing anything else all the time he was there, but pointing him out to other guests, as "the gentleman who was so abused last month in 'Blackwood's Magazine.'" If he knocked at the door of a friend, the look and reply of the servant (whatever they might be), made it evident to him that he or she had been reading "Blackwood's Magazine" before the family were up in the morning! If he had occasion to call at any of the publishers for whom he might be

writing at the time, the case was still worse,—inasmuch as there his bread was at stake, as well as that personal civility, which he valued no less. Mr. Colburn would be "not within," as a matter of course; for his clerks to even ascertain his pleasure on that point beforehand would be wholly superfluous: had they not all chuckled over the article at their tea the evening before? Even the instinct of the shop-boys would catch the cue from the significant looks of those above them, and refuse to take his name to Mr. Ollier. They would "believe he was gone to dinner." He could not, they thought, want to have anything to say to a person who, as it were, went about with a sheet of "Blackwood's" pinned to his coat-tail, like a dish-clout!

Then at home at his lodgings, if the servant who waited upon him did not answer his bell the first time—ah! 'twas clear—she had read "Blackwood's," or heard talk of it at the bar of the public-house when she went for the beer! Did the landlady send up his bill a day earlier than usual, or ask for payment of it less civilly than was her custom—how could he wonder at it? It was

"Blackwood's" doing. But if she gave him notice to quit (on the score, perhaps, of his inordinately late hours) he was a lost man! for would anybody take him in after having read "Blackwood's?" Even the strangers that he met in the street seemed to look at him askance, "with jealous leer malign," as if they knew him by intuition for a man on whom was set the double seal of public and private infamy; the doomed and denounced of "Blackwood's Magazine."

This may seem like exaggeration to the reader of 1854. But I assure him that it falls as far short of the truth as it may seem to go beyond it; that not one of the cases to which I have alluded above but has been in substance detailed to me by Hazlitt himself, as (according to *his* interpretation of it) a simple matter-of-fact result of the attacks in question!

APPENDIX TO VOL. II.

Robert Ward was born in Mount Street, Grosvenor Square, on the 19th of March, 1765, on one of the occasional visits of his parents to this country—his father being a Spanish merchant, residing at Gibraltar, his mother a native Spanish lady of Jewish extraction. This lady died when her son Robert was only three years of age, and the child was taken under the special protection of the Hon. Mrs. Cornwallis, granddaughter of Charles, second Lord Townshend, and wife of the then Governor of Gibraltar, General Cornwallis, who was brother of Lord Cornwallis. The boy showed early signs of talent, and was, at the age of eight years, sent to England for education, under a sound but eccentric scholar, who kept a school at Walthamstow.

At the age of eighteen (in January, 1783), Robert was sent to Christ Church, Oxford, where he remained till 1787, and contracted several distinguished friendships, which lasted during the lives of the parties respectively, and some of which considerably influenced his future career. Among these latter were those of the famous Dr. Cyril Jackson, Master of Christ Church,

the Hon. Sturges Bourne, and Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, each of whom is repeatedly and affectionately alluded to in Mr. Ward's subsequent writings.

Shortly after quitting Oxford, young Ward was entered at the Inner Temple; but before being called to the bar his health induced a visit to the baths of Barèges; and the fascinations of French society detained him in France till the breaking out of the Revolution, when it appears, from a statement of his own, quoted by Mr. Phipps, that he "was arrested for having the same name and wearing the same coloured coat and waistcoat as another Ward, guilty of treason; was ordered without trial to Paris, to be guillotined; and only escaped by their catching the real traitor. I was, however, banished the Republic for my name's sake."

On the 18th of June, 1790, Mr. Ward was called to the bar by the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, and commenced in earnest those studies which would undoubtedly have led him to future eminence in his profession, had he not been turned aside from the pursuit by circumstances which directed his attention to political life. An accidental rencontre and discussion with one of the *têtes exaltés* of the period led to an inquiry before the Privy Council, in which young Ward's intellectual energy and sagacity attracted the attention of Pitt and Eldon (the latter then Solicitor-General): and his publication, shortly afterwards, of a work entitled "An Inquiry into the Foundation and History of the Law of Nations, &c.," secured to him the future support and favour of those two distinguished men —the former of whom, not long afterwards, offered him

(in 1802) a seat in Parliament. In the meantime, Mr. Ward had married Miss Maling, a sister of the Countess Mulgrave, and had made such considerable advances in his profession, as to induce him virtually to refuse an offer made him by Lord Eldon, of the choice of two colonial judgeships, one of the Admiralty Court in Nova Scotia, the other in the West Indies. Before his entrance into Parliament (as member for Cockermouth), Mr. Ward had also written another political work which attracted considerable notice. It was entitled "A Treatise on the Relative Rights and Duties of Belligerent and Neutral Powers in Maritime Affairs."

From the period of his entrance into Parliament, Mr. Ward devoted himself almost exclusively to politics—led thereto, no doubt, by the favourable position given to him by his family connexion with Lord Mulgrave, and by the steady friendship and affection evinced towards him by that distinguished nobleman during the whole of his life.

Mr. Ward's first speech in Parliament was a very successful one. It was on the abuses in naval affairs; and its marked opposition to Canning and those with whom he then acted, showed the tendency of the speaker's views towards that great Tory party with which he was ever afterwards allied. At this period, the head and soul of that party, Pitt, was not in power; but he succeeded to it shortly afterwards, in the spring of 1804. Up to this moment, Mr. Ward had not formally abandoned his profession, and there can be little doubt that the great law offices of the Crown were open to him, had he chosen to make them the express object

of his pursuit. But he evidently preferred the more brilliant career of politics; and the accession of Mr. Pitt to office brought about the turning point of his life. At the latter end of 1804, Mr. Pitt offered the Foreign Secretaryship to Lord Mulgrave, who immediately proposed to name Mr. Ward Under-Secretary, an offer which was eagerly accepted, and Mr. Ward thenceforth became one of the most earnest and active politicians of the day.

Few and brief as were the opportunities of official and other intercourse between Pitt and his *protegé*, Robert Ward, the great statesman had evidently conceived not merely a high opinion of his capacity, but a strong regard for his character; and perhaps the thing in the world which Mr. Ward most prized was a paper, traced (for it cannot be said to be written—no single word of its three or four sides being legible except the imperfect signature) on his death-bed. It appears that on giving up his profession on his acceptance of office (and resigning a Welsh judgeship for that purpose), a spontaneous promise had been made to Mr. Ward, that the great pecuniary risks he ran, by changing what was now the certainty of success in his profession for the precariousness of political office, should be compensated to him by an adequate pension on his quitting office; but the necessary arrangements had not been completed at the time when Mr. Pitt felt the hand of death to be upon him; and even in that supreme moment he more than once alluded to the unfulfilled promise, and at last, when, at the very point of death, and he could not articulate, he made signs for

paper and ink, and traced the precious paper alluded to—its signature being the only legible portion of it.

The immediate advent to power of Pitt's great rival, Charles Fox, displaced Mr. Ward from office; but Fox's death, only a few months afterwards, opened the way for the Portland Administration, in which Lord Mulgrave accepted the office of First Lord of the Admiralty, and appointed Mr. Ward to a seat at the board. This was in the spring of 1807; and from this period till his final retirement from political life, in 1820, Mr. Ward continued to form part of the successive ministries of the Duke of Portland, Mr. Percival, and Lord Liverpool.

In May, 1810, Lord Mulgrave transferred his services from the Admiralty to the Ordnance, of which he accepted the superintendence as Master-General; and a year afterwards Mr. Ward joined his friend as a member of that board. In this office—Clerk of the Ordnance—Mr. Ward remained till his final retirement from political life in 1823—the last five years of his official career being passed under the great duke himself, who succeeded Lord Mulgrave as Master-General of the Ordnance in November, 1818. The death of his beloved wife seems to have been the immediate cause of Mr. Ward's retirement from Parliament and from political life, which step took place immediately after the close of the session of 1823. He shortly afterwards received the appointment of Auditor of the Civil List, in token of the public services he had rendered, and the pecuniary sacrifices he had made in so doing. This appointment, at the time of its being conferred upon

Mr. Ward, was clearly understood by himself and his friends to be a *patent* one, that could not be revoked during the life of the holder; but it was afterwards (in 1831) abolished by the Whig Government.

Having now (in 1823) retired to his residence, Hyde House, in Buckinghamshire, Mr. Ward commenced his novel of "Tremaine; or, the Man of Refinement," which was completed and in the hands of its publisher, Mr. Colburn, in the summer of 1824, and was published anonymously early in the spring of 1825.

Before the conclusion of the same spring, Mr. Ward announced to the two or three private friends who were alone in his secret, that he had advanced far in another work of similar general character with "Tremaine." This was published (also anonymously) in March, 1827, under the title of "De Vere; or, the Man of Independence."

In the summer of 1828,* Mr. Ward married Mrs. Plumer Lewin, of Gilston Park, Herts. This lady was granddaughter to the seventh Earl of Abercorn. She had previously married Mr. Plumer, who was for forty years member for the county, and after his death (in 1822) Commander Lewin, of the Royal Navy, who died in 1827. On marrying Mrs. Plumer Lewin, Mr. Ward received the royal permission to take and use the name of Plumer, as a prefix to that of Ward. It was shortly after this marriage that the Whig Government

* I take this date from Mr. Phipps's "Memoir" (ii. 172), but it seems scarcely consistent with subsequent pages of the same vol. (177 to 180), where Mr. Ward addresses and is addressed as R. *Plumer* Ward, under the dates of March and April, 1828.

abolished Mr. Plumer Ward's office of Auditor of the Civil List; and he then ceased to have any connexion with political life.

During the years 1829-30, Mr. Ward was visited by a grievous series of domestic afflictions: he lost his two eldest daughters within two or three days of each other, and his wife within a few months afterwards; and in 1831 the same insidious disease, consumption, which had carried off his other daughters, attacked his youngest and only remaining one.

It was during the prostration of mind which followed these afflictions that Mr. Ward met the lady who afterwards became his third wife, Mrs. Okeover, the widowed daughter of the late gallant General Sir George Anson—a connexion which restored and secured to his declining years that happy buoyancy of spirit which had marked the whole of his previous life, with the exception of the two fatal years above alluded to, and the trying period immediately following the loss of his only remaining daughter in 1834. This last blow again drove Mr. Ward from England, and in all probability was the exciting cause to his again taking up his pen—his favourite succedaneum for all mortal ills.

In the course of the years 1836, 7, and 8, Mr. Ward wrote and published successively "Illustrations of Human Life" (three vols.), "Pictures of the World" (three vols.), and an "Essay on the Revolution of 1688," (two vols.)

In the latter year (1838) the young son of Mrs. Plumer Ward succeeded, by the will of his uncle, to the fine estate of Okeover Hall, Staffordshire, and his mother

being appointed his guardian during the six or seven years' minority of the heir, Mr. Ward and his wife returned from abroad, and the family took up their residence at Okeover Hall. Here Mr. Ward passed what he himself regarded, notwithstanding his advanced age, as the very happiest years of his life; and here it was that, in 1840, he commenced and completed for the press what must be regarded, under the circumstances of its production, as the most remarkable of his works—since, with all the vigour, freshness, and originality of the best of his other works, it was conceived and composed between the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth years of his age. It is entitled "De Clifford; or, the Constant Man," and belongs to the same class of works as "Tremaine" and "De Vere."

In the spring of 1846, Mrs. Plumer Ward's father, Lieutenant-General Sir George Anson, G.C.B., received the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of Chelsea Hospital; and the official residence being a very capacious one, Mr. and Mrs. Ward were induced to leave Okeover, and reside there with her father; and here, on the 13th of August, 1846, Mr. Ward calmly closed his earthly career, at the age of eighty-one years, his faculties remaining unimpaired to the last.

END OF VOL. II.

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